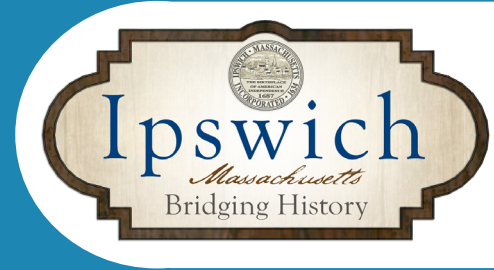


# IPSWICH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2021 - 2036

Draft 2/26/21







Cover: The Ipswich  
Riverwalk Mural, Alan  
Pearsall  
Left: Red Barn at  
Appleton Farm, Stoney  
Stone

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 1</b> Introduction	6
<b>Chapter 2</b> Community Vision	14
<b>Chapter 3</b> Resilient and Sustainable Services and Infrastructure	23
<b>Chapter 4</b> Responsive and Diverse Development	40
<b>Chapter 5</b> Thriving and Attractive Town Center	50
<b>Chapter 6</b> Safe and Connected Transportation Network	62
<b>Chapter 7</b> Supportive and Inclusive Government and Services	70
<b>Chapter 8</b> Implementation	76
<b>Acronyms</b>	78
<b>Resources</b>	79
<b>Master List of Goals and Strategies</b>	80





Choate Bridge, Original  
Watercolor by Lawrence  
Webster



PLANNING BOARD

# TOWN OF IPSWICH

## IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS 01938

March 2021

Dear fellow members of the Ipswich community,

The Ipswich Planning Board is excited to share with you the Ipswich Community Development Plan Update, a plan that will carry the Town forward from today to 2035 with confidence and a united voice. The visions established herein were shaped by an impressive array of community voices, always with the best interests of and hopes for our common future in mind.

We would like to thank the Ipswich community for sharing their vision and entrusting the Planning Board, with direction from the Community Development Plan Steering Committee, the Planning Department, and the Town’s consultants, with such an important task. Ipswich is an amazing community that offers so much to its residents and businesses while also playing a tremendous role in the vitality of our region.

The purpose of this CDP Update is to guide local decisions to shape future development, prepare for future challenges, and preserve community assets. With a long-range horizon of 15 years, the plan provides a basis for decision-making about land use planning and development, housing policy, transportation investment, economic development, climate resiliency, and capital improvement planning for public facilities and infrastructure.

The strategies that support the goals outlined in this plan will require broad and robust community engagement and their success depends on your input and support. Our process forward will also include sometimes difficult budget and policy decisions that will guide the plan’s priorities for implementation.

We look forward to working with the Town’s CDP Implementation Committee, other boards and committees, and the full Ipswich community to achieve these visions.

Keith Anderson  
Chair, Ipswich Planning Board







## 2020 PHASE II: GOALS AND STRATEGIES

During Phase II of the planning process, which kicked off in February 2020, the project team worked collaboratively to build on the CDP's first phase. Phase II focused on identifying goals and strategies to achieve the community vision. Through the Phase II engagement process, the project team confirmed that many of the goals and strategies of the 2003 CDP are still relevant, particularly with an eye to strengthening the Town's resiliency to climate change and environmental impacts.

Although the project experienced slight delays due to the COVID health pandemic beginning in March 2020, the project team successfully kept the project as close to the original schedule as possible. Planned in-person engagement shifted to virtual, including: a community survey with 148 respondents held in April and May 2020 to provide feedback on draft goals and eight virtual CDP Steering Committee meetings. This process was iterative and resulted in modifications to the community vision. The revised vision is included in this report and replaces the vision included in the Phase I portion of the update.

The project team worked collaboratively to coordinate other local planning efforts including the 2020 update of the Housing Production Plan and the work of the Strategic Planning Working Group during 2020. The consultants held a meeting with department directors across Town disciplines to seek input on the goals and strategies. The Steering Committee included robust discussions of implementation in every stage of the planning process.

The draft CDP 2021-2036 was completed and available for public review in the early winter of 2021. Over the winter and spring of 2021, the Steering Committee will work with the Planning and Development staff to proceed with continued outreach and engagement with boards, committees, employees,

## OTHER COMMUNITY PLANS AND STUDIES

Since 2003, the Town has undertaken a variety of community planning efforts. These studies and plans, completed by dedicated volunteers and town staff, have provided an important foundation for this plan and include the following:

- [2003 Community Development Plan \(updated 2007\)](#)
- [2004 Town Character Statement](#)
- [2006 Housing Production Plan](#)
- [2008 Community Development Plan Amendments](#)
- [2009 Ipswich Non-Motorized Transportation Plan](#)
- [2010 A Study of Ipswich's Agriculture and Agricultural Land](#)
- [2011 Climate Action Plan](#)
- [2013 Downtown Assessment](#)
- [2013, 2010 Update, and 2007 Ipswich Open Space & Recreation Plans](#)
- [2015 Old North Burial Ground Preservation Master Plan](#)
- [2017 Climate Action Plan Update](#)
- [2017 Great Marsh Coastal Adaption Plan](#)
- [2017 Water Demand and Supply Evaluation Report](#)
- [2017 Economic Development Strategy](#)
- [2018 Ipswich Businesses Acting on Rising Seas Report](#)
- [2018 Hammatt Street Lot Parking Study](#)
- [2018 Complete Streets Policy and Prioritization Plan](#)
- [2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update](#)
- [2019 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan](#)
- [2020 Water Neutral Growth Report](#)
- [2020 Housing Production Plan](#)



Piping Plover Chick,  
Essex Heritage 2014  
Photo Contest Grand  
Prize, Ken Jordan

organizational and business partners, other stakeholders, and the general public through a multi-faceted outreach campaign. The Planning Board will be asked to adopt the Plan and will then submit the Plan to Town Meeting for community endorsement.

The Steering Committee has recommended a smaller implementation committee be formed over the summer of 2021 to chart the community's path forward to 2036. The 2021-2036 CDP will provide local policy-makers a rational path to prepare for and shape future development and preservation of the community.



Winthrop Elementary  
School Playground Clam  
Shac, ReCreation &  
Culture Archives



# IPSWICH IN CONTEXT

Ipswich is a rural coastal community on the North Shore of Massachusetts defined by its marshes, river, beaches, farms, open space, and historic Town Center. Ipswich boasts the largest collection of pre-1725 historic homes than any other community in the nation.

Almost 14,000 residents reside within its 33 square miles. It is located thirty miles northeast of Boston in Essex County and is bordered by the municipalities of Rowley, Topsfield, Boxford, Hamilton, Essex, and Gloucester.<sup>2</sup> The Town government operates under a Town Manager and Select Board charter—adopted in 1967.

Incorporated in 1634, Ipswich calls itself “the Birthplace of American Independence.” In 1687, residents protested taxation without representation and were jailed. Mercantile clipper ships favored the deep-water seaports of Newburyport and Salem but a small textile industry around lace and hosiery developed in the community.

Although mills were built along the tidal Ipswich River, Ipswich remained primarily a fishing and farming community into the 20th century.

The CDP Needs Assessment FY2020-2035 (November 2019) included profiles for each of the four study areas: housing and demographics, economic development, transportation, and public infrastructure and climate resilience.

In addition, the development of the Housing Production Plan (November 2020) provided further analysis to identify housing needs.



## HOUSING AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Ipswich is challenged to create a mix of housing that meets the needs of its current and future population while retaining its rural character and preserving its historic assets. The number of households is projected to increase between now and 2030—suggesting an overall need to increase the housing stock in Ipswich.

Ipswich’s primary housing need is a more diverse housing stock that offers more choices to serve a changing and growing population. In particular, this analysis indicates a need for more rental, multi-family, affordable, smaller, and service-enriched housing units.



## TRANSPORTATION

While the Town Center is walkable, the rest of Ipswich lacks the infrastructure to support and encourage safe multimodal travel. In fact, Ipswich is well positioned to support and encourage more diversified travel modes with the presence of a commuter rail station on the Newburyport/Rockport line.

As the community looks to the future, the greatest needs are for holistic transportation safety, accessibility, and mobility to create a more sustainable and comprehensive transportation network both in Town and regionally.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ipswich has a highly educated pool of residents with substantial human capital, historic and unique quality-of-place, a charming and attractive Town Center, and good connectivity to the rest of Essex County and Boston via major state routes and public transit.

In addition to its human capital and physical assets, Ipswich has laid a strong foundation for economic development efforts through a number of guiding economic-focused documents since the 2003 Community Development Plan. These elements can be leveraged to help Ipswich attract and sustain businesses in its commercial and industrial districts.



## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

In many ways, Ipswich is a Town in transition. The Town is committed to maintaining its historic character, open space, and small-Town feel while also balancing the impacts of any new development and additional residents that may come.

Future changes due to climate change may transform the Town further as environmental risks, including flooding impact Ipswich’s ecosystems, water resources, residents, historic sites, local businesses, infrastructure and public services.

Climate resilience and public infrastructure are fundamentally intertwined. Environmental changes influence demand and may impact the effectiveness and viability of existing infrastructure. Conversely, well-planned and well-managed infrastructure and service capacity provides a protective barrier against future risks.

Adaptation measures will be needed to protect natural resources such as the Great Marsh and preserve public access to recreational resources such as Crane Beach. Infrastructure investments will be needed to proactively mitigate risks.

<sup>2</sup> The border with Gloucester is across Essex Bay. There is no land border.





# PLANNING FRAMEWORK

To create a meaningful and effective Community Development Plan, the elements of the plan are not planned in silos, but rather integrated systematically so that they consider and reinforce one another—and support the regional planning framework.

To best capture the synergies among the four CDP elements and reflect the community values and priorities that emerged from the planning process, this plan is organized by core vision themes that comprise the community's vision. Each core vision theme has associated goals and strategies.

Crane Beach,  
Stoney Stone

1

## VISION

An aspirational view of what residents hope the community will be like in the future, at its very best. Before a meaningful plan can be created, the community needs to imagine the future it is aiming for. The vision statement then becomes the driving force behind the plan. An overarching community vision statement and core vision themes are included in Chapter 2.

5

## CORE VISION THEMES

Five core vision themes emerged through the planning process based on the community's values and priority issues that the community is facing: 1) Resilient and Sustainable Services and Infrastructure; 2) Responsive and Diverse Development; 3) Thriving and Attractive Town Center; 4) Safe and Connected Transportation Network; and 5) Supportive and Inclusive Government and Services

13

## GOALS

This plan includes a total of 13 goals that describe conditions to aim for to achieve the community vision over time. Goals describe what the community wants to achieve.

71

## STRATEGIES

This plan includes 71 strategies describing how to achieve the community's goals. Strategies are ways that the town will work to achieve the goals. They are actionable and will involve funding, regulations, programs, and/or use of other town resources, such as staff or volunteer time.

## CDP ELEMENTS

The 2003 Community Development Plan included three elements: housing, economic development, and transportation. In 2008, amendment to the CDP added language to provide greater emphasis on a fourth element: public facilities. However, unlike a typical CDP, this plan is organized by the core vision themes, not by the four CDP elements. All CDP elements are covered in the substance of the plan and the report includes these icons to indicate where they are addressed.



HOUSING



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



TRANSPORTATION



PUBLIC FACILITIES



## Community Vision

# 2

Paine House at  
Greenwood Farm,  
Andrew Borsari

## IPSWICH IN 2035...

is a scenic coastal community defined by its open space and natural resources, First Period homes and historic streetscapes, vibrant local businesses, strong schools and community partners, and a welcoming social fabric for residents and visitors of all ages, races, ethnicities, and backgrounds.



*IPSWICH IN 2035 . . .*

has healthy ecosystems with many assets, including the Ipswich River, winding through the Town to the productive shellfish beds of the Ipswich Bay, Crane Beach and the salt marshes of the Great Marsh, active farmland and local farmers, and forests rich with wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

Ipswich is environmentally and economically sustainable and is equipped to respond and appropriately manage change. The Town’s key infrastructure, resources, and vulnerable populations are protected and able to withstand or bounce back from changing economic and climate conditions and events.

New development and redevelopment are integrated into the community and well-designed. The Town balances increased and diverse economic activity with preservation of open space, historic assets, and community culture.

The Town is committed, through local policies and initiatives and with the leadership of Town government and governing bodies, to providing:

- Various housing options to support community members through all phases of life
- Safe and sustainable transportation choices
- High-quality public services for a diversity of residents
- Transparent and equitable operations and policies that align with community goals and strategies

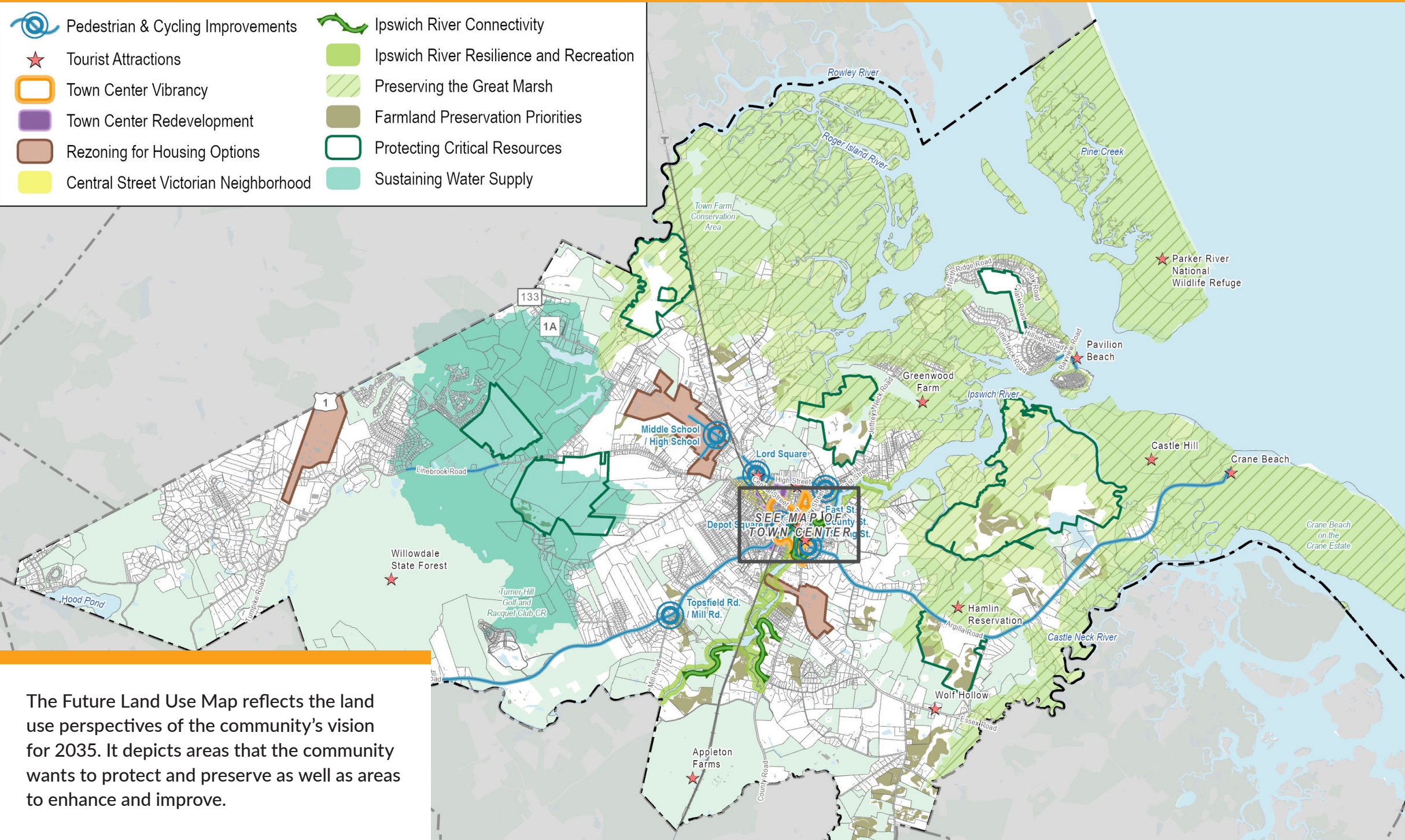
Clammers on the Eagle Hill River,  
Micheal Harvey





# IPSWICH IN 2035

This map represents a scenario for possible future land use based on the community's vision.



The Future Land Use Map reflects the land use perspectives of the community's vision for 2035. It depicts areas that the community wants to protect and preserve as well as areas to enhance and improve.



## PEDESTRIAN & CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS

Improve and expand local transportation options and make roads safe for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. (Goals 11 and 12)



## TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Cultivate a diverse economic base that supports a strong local economy including a vibrant eco-tourism and blue economy as well as existing businesses, particularly small businesses. Expand and enhance the characteristics that attract visitors to Ipswich, including its local and regional natural, cultural, and historic environments. (Goals 7 and 9)



## TOWN CENTER VIBRANCY

Strengthen Town Center's economic and cultural vibrancy by preserving its historic authenticity, protecting resources from flooding, and improve connections to the Ipswich River. (Goal 8)



## TOWN CENTER REDEVELOPMENT

Create new housing options in neighborhoods near shops and services and supported by public water and sewer, strong schools, and welcoming community. (Goal 6)



## REZONING FOR HOUSING OPTIONS

Provide a range of housing choices to foster a socio-economically diverse community and to reflect the changing residential preferences and needs in our state, region, and local community. Recognizing that new housing can impact existing residents, invest in quality-of-life improvements to neighborhoods such as parking solutions and better multi-modal infrastructure including sidewalks, safe crossings, and sidewalk snow clearing. (Goals 5 and 6)



## CENTRAL STREET VICTORIAN NEIGHBORHOOD

Ipswich has a wealth of historic resources including the Central Street Victorian Neighborhood. This distinctive Ipswich neighborhood includes historic houses and streets but has not received historic designation. Preservation of these resources will be critical to maintain the neighborhood's historical integrity.



## IPSWICH RIVER CONNECTIVITY

Celebrate and connect the Ipswich River to Town Center with improved and open access, expanded Riverwalk, greater visibility, recreational amenities, and public events. (Goal 8)



## IPSWICH RIVER RESILIENCE AND RECREATION

Protect open space and natural resources, including the Ipswich River and its watershed. (Goal 3)



## PRESERVING THE GREAT MARSH

Protect natural resources for climate resiliency including the Great Marsh, beaches and dunes, clam flats, forests, wildlife habitat, and other critical ecosystems. (Goal 3)



## FARMLAND PRESERVATION PRIORITIES

Protect open space and natural resources for climate resiliency and agricultural and support local farmers and clambers. (Goal 3)



## PROTECTING CRITICAL RESOURCES

Protect critical natural resources including to increase resiliency and address marsh and coastal erosion and to maintain and improve Ipswich's water system performance.



## SUSTAINING WATER SUPPLY










Through resource protection, Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness, resilient infrastructure, water neutral growth, and conservation, improve the overall water system resiliency and conservation.



# IPSWICH TOWN CENTER IN 2035

Map: Future Land Use - Ipswich Town Center

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

-  Pedestrian & Cycling Improvements
-  Tourist Attractions
-  Ipswich River Connectivity
-  Ipswich River Resilience and Recreation
-  Central Street Victorian Neighborhood
-  Architectural Preservation District
-  Town Center Vibrancy
-  Town Center Redevelopment
-  Multipurpose Placemaking



Central Street,  
Stoney Stone

“

*I think that a strong local business presence is critical in maintaining both the small town feel and creating a sustainable tax base that can support other initiatives. This should be focused on, but not exclusive to, Town Center and should aim to diversify our exposure to our large employers.” - CDP Goals Survey Respondent, Spring 2020*



CORE VISION THEMES

CHAPTER 3

RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



GOALS: 3 STRATEGIES: 16

Working collaboratively with its partners throughout the North Shore, Ipswich in 2035 is resilient and prepared to meet future challenges. Ipswich River and the Town's marshes, wildlife corridors, and other ecological resources are healthy and thriving. Ipswich is energy independent with its public buildings—and many residential and commercial buildings—powered by clean, renewable energy.

In 2035, Ipswich has improved and expanded its public services and infrastructure, particularly for waste management and water supply, to support development. Regional collaborations and connections have improved, particularly around transportation and the water supply. Residents and new development conserve energy and water. Sustainability is integrated into curriculum and into physical facilities, both school and other municipal infrastructure, including water conservation and energy efficiencies and practices.

CHAPTER 4

RESPONSIVE AND DIVERSE DEVELOPMENT



GOALS: 3 STRATEGIES: 18

New housing and business development continue to be concentrated in walkable areas, including Town Center and near the train station. Not only is new development sustainable, it pays special attention to the Town's historic character, natural green spaces, walkability, and access to services.

The Town's housing stock in 2035 is a mix of apartments, condominiums, and single-family houses that can accommodate a range of socially and economically diverse households, including young adults, older adults, large families, and people with disabilities.

Diverse commercial development offers new amenities, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and increases the Town's commercial tax base. Existing major employers continue to adapt, innovate, and grow, with supportive regulations in place, such as streamlined permitting, flexible zoning, and transportation connectivity. There is a useful mix of businesses that capitalize on seasonal tourism as well as businesses that provide year-round services, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and visitors.

CHAPTER 5

THRIVING AND ATTRACTIVE TOWN CENTER



GOALS: 3 STRATEGIES: 13

Town Center continues to be a popular gathering space for Town events, programs, and performances for community members of all ages. The Town continues to foster social connections that celebrate the increasing diversity of its residents. Residents are able to stroll along the Ipswich River using the expanded Riverwalk. Town Center storefronts are still populated by local owner-operated businesses—and many Ipswich residents work from their homes or in Town.

CHAPTER 6

SAFE AND CONNECTED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



GOALS: 2 STRATEGIES: 18

In 2035, residents opt for more sustainable forms of transportation, such as biking, walking, and public transit. At least fifty percent of Ipswich commuters use alternative transportation methods, traveling on foot, by bike, or riding the commuter rail or bus, to get to work. New residents are drawn to the community's small-town feel that provides easy transit connection to Boston and communities along the North Shore.

CHAPTER 7

SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES



GOALS: 3 STRATEGIES: 6

In 2035, elected leaders, boards and committees, and Town staff work collaboratively to achieve the community's vision and goals, support a diverse population, and provide services in a transparent and equitable manner.

Town boards, committees, and school and municipal employees are gender-balanced and reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the community. Residents with differing opinions are able to problem solve through collaboration and consensus-building. Ipswich's students and overall community members are supported through a variety of educational, extracurricular, and recreational opportunities.





# 3

## Resilient and Sustainable Services and Infrastructure



Ipswich River below  
County Street Bridge,  
Mother's Day Flood on  
May 14th, 2006,  
Daniel Bates

### CORE VISION THEME

Working collaboratively with its partners throughout the North Shore, Ipswich in 2035 is resilient and prepared to meet future challenges. Ipswich River and the Town's marshes, wildlife corridors, and other ecological resources are healthy and thriving. Ipswich is energy independent with its public buildings—and many residential and commercial buildings—powered by clean, renewable energy.

In 2035, Ipswich has improved and expanded its public services and infrastructure, particularly for waste management and water supply, to support development. Regional collaborations and connections have improved, particularly around transportation and the water supply. Residents and new development conserve energy and water. Sustainability is integrated into curriculum and into physical facilities, both school and other municipal infrastructure, including water conservation and energy efficiencies and practices.

### GOALS

#### 1 CLIMATE-RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Invest in natural systems and resilient infrastructure to buffer the Town against anticipated climate trends, including sea level rise, drought, flooding, and heavier and more intense precipitation.

#### 2 REDUCED CONSUMPTION AND EMISSIONS

Conserve water, reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and increase the use of renewable energy.

#### 3 NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION FOR CLIMATE-RESILIENCY

Protect open space and natural resources, including the Ipswich River and its watershed, the Great Marsh, beaches and dunes, clam flats, forests, wildlife habitat, and other critical ecosystems.



## GOAL 1

## CLIMATE-RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Invest in natural systems and resilient infrastructure to buffer the Town against anticipated climate trends, including sea level rise, drought, flooding, and heavier and more intense precipitation.

## STRATEGIES

***a. Implement the top recommendations of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) plan.***

As described in the 2019 MVP Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings, the top hazards for Ipswich are: coastal storm surge and sea level rise; inland flooding; extreme cold/winter storms; and heat/drought/fire.

The top recommendations for community action address the seven top areas of concern: 1) water supply and infrastructure; 2) environmental resources, especially the Great Marsh; 3) wastewater infrastructure, 4) land use; 5) electricity and communications; 6) public safety and transportation/roads; and 7) vulnerable populations.

Develop a multi-faceted approach and work plan to implement the top recommendations of the MVP to improve resiliency. As part of this approach:

- Expand the role of Town departments by identifying responsibilities to seek funding and coordinate implementation of the MVP. Create a framework for collaboration among Town departments to efficiently and effectively implement the MVP.
- Expand the role of the Climate Resiliency Committee (CRC) from a focus primarily on energy and carbon reduction to a broader focus on all aspects of climate resiliency to support the Town's implementation efforts. Identify Town staff to oversee and guide the work of the CRC to ensure alignment with the Town's implementation workplan and coordinated action.

***b. Continue working regionally, with neighboring communities and other partner organizations, to share best practices and develop solutions to increase regional resiliency and address marsh and coastal erosion.***

As recommended by the MVP, develop a regional approach to advocate for and pursue updates to state regulations designed to support adaptive actions and streamline permitting processes to implement innovative actions aimed at preserving sensitive environments. Set goals and continue to restore, protect, and enhance the Great Marsh. Protect barrier beach and marsh systems.

Work collaboratively with regional partners, including the Ipswich River Watershed Association, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and other regional and state organizations, to support land conservation for climate resiliency. Inventory and study possible viable sites for marsh migration.

***c. Assess, forecast, and plan for improvements to high-risk infrastructure to prepare for extreme weather occurrences.***

Town departments should assess and plan for infrastructure improvements using the most current available climate data, projections, and tools for extreme weather occurrences. Build on the Water & Wastewater Department's asset management plan and the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Work Group.



Update and conduct new and broader asset inventories to better understand public utility and infrastructure conditions as well as community health and safety needs to better predict areas of network stress and potential failure. Utilize data collected from the past Hazard Mitigation and MVP plans and related assessments, including the recent tidal crossing study assessing the condition and needs of culvert crossings across Town. Create a composite inventory and prioritization plan to evaluate and recommend action to raise or otherwise elevate roadways, causeways, and bridges.

Develop a vulnerability heat-index map in a manner that overlays inventory data and assesses the critical convergences of interconnected public and private data points, considering the vulnerability of roadways, essential businesses, medical and health care services.

Forecast both fiscal and livability impacts due to flooding and severe weather events. Formalize and prepare mapping that highlights the geographic areas, infrastructure and populations that are most at-risk in the future due to weather events brought about by climate change. Consider hiring a GIS Coordinator to support these assessments.

***d. Maintain and improve Ipswich's water system performance.***

Act upon multi-faceted recommendations identified in the 2019 Water Demand and Supply Evaluation, the 2020 Water Neutral Growth Report (WNGR), and any future Water System master plans to achieve a long-term plan for capital improvements Recognize that the actions of many different departments are interconnected and coordinated action will shape the future of the community.

While various upgrades have been made to the water system over the years, significant expenditures will be necessary in the future to maintain and improve system performance. Formalize necessary studies and permitting work and set timelines to take on necessary and feasible infrastructure repairs and/or upgrades, and betterment projects including upgrading the Town Wharf pumping station, replacing the sewer siphon and sewer interceptor, and continuing to seek new or improved water supply sources and/or indirect potable reuse.<sup>3</sup>

EBSCO Parking Lot, Big Flood, Mother's Day Flood on May 14th, 2006, Daniel Bates

<sup>3</sup> AECOM, Water Demand and Supply Evaluation, February 2019, pgs. 55-56: <https://www.ipswichma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11327/Ipswich-Water-Demand-and-Supply-Evaluation-Final-Report-2-22-19>



*e. Adopt land-use policies to conserve and protect key natural resources and promote sustainable development and focus new development in areas best suited to accommodate it.*

Using the [Massachusetts Sustainable Development Principles](#) as a guide, review land-use policies and regulations, including the Open Space Preservation Zoning provisions (Ipswich Zoning Bylaw, Section IX.A.) and subdivision regulations, and revise to better protect community resources. Complete development of Water Neutral Growth initiatives, including adoption of a bylaw governing water use in new development and redevelopment, as recommended in the WNGR. Develop stronger water conservation and stormwater management bylaws.

Consider additional strategies for thoughtfully managed longer-term retreat to limit development in coastal and other at-risk areas. These strategies may include limits on new building and rebuilding and property acquisition.

Resources/More Information:

- [The Metropolitan Area Planning Council \(MAPC\) Smart Growth Principles for Development](#)
- [Mass Audubon's Shaping the Future of Your Community](#)
- [A.R. Siders, et al, Science: The Case for Strategic and Managed Climate Retreat, 23 Aug 2019](#)
- [Massachusetts Sustainable Development Principles](#)
- [Ipswich Water Neutral Growth Plan](#)

**“Ipswich’s natural and historic resources are its calling card. There should be maximum focus on preserving them and making them accessible.” – CDP Goals Survey Respondent, Spring 2020**

*f. Hire or contract with a grant coordinator and/or an engineer to help coordinate sustainability and resiliency efforts and to seek and manage grants across many departments.*

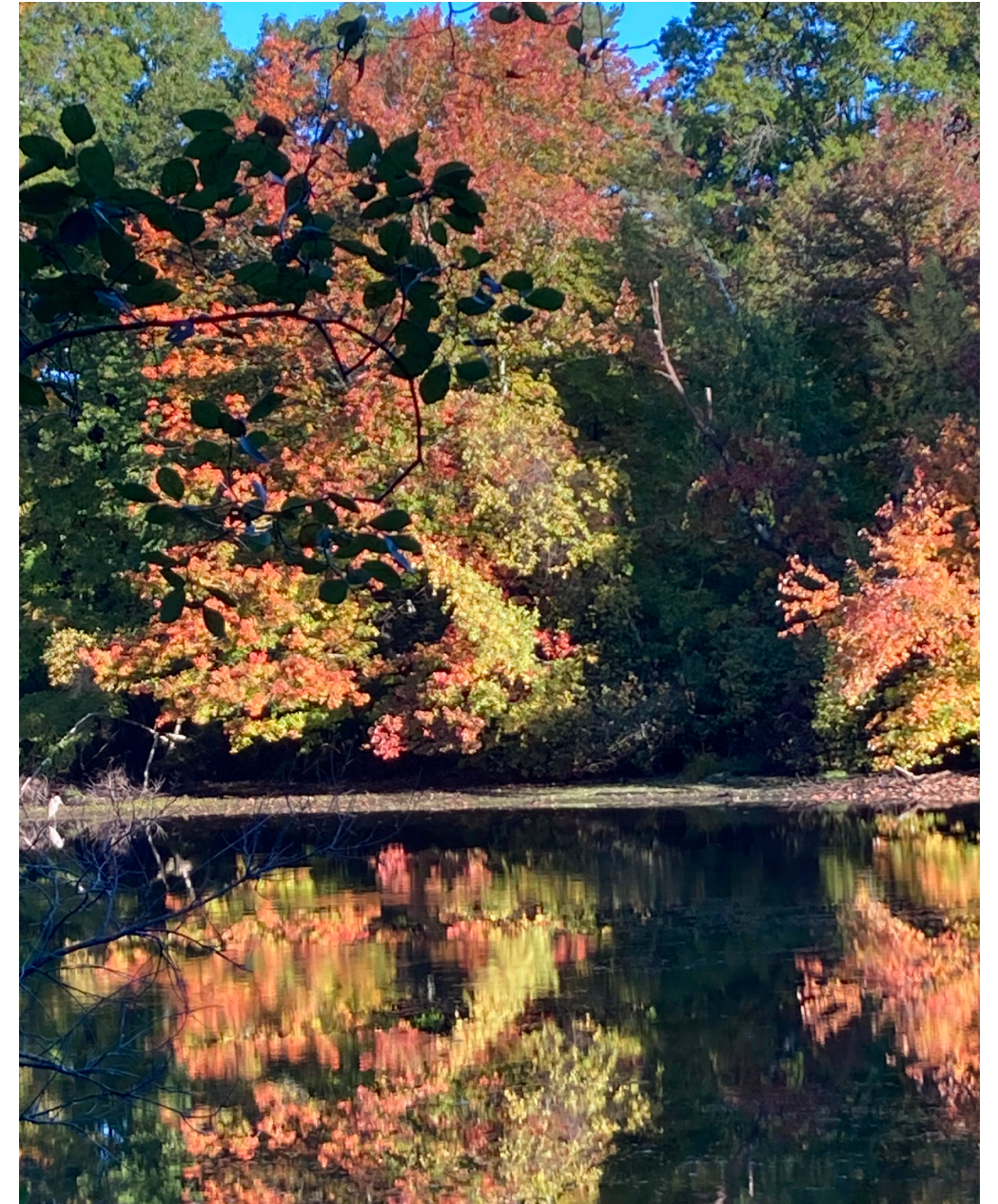
Municipalities are becoming increasingly aware that climate, sea-level rise, infrastructure, facilities, and public services all contribute to the overall livability of a community. These needs and services are all interconnected and require a proactive approach, with enhanced inter-departmental coordination and substantially leveraging local funds with public and private funding sources. Communities that have invested in formalizing department leadership positions with trained professionals on staff have noted real, sustainable and long-term benefits in regard to full time attention to local issues and opportunities. Two options for expanding trained professional staff or consultant services to enhance the Town’s capacity to implement sustainability and resiliency efforts are a grants coordinator and an engineer. Both skill sets would provide benefits to the Town.

**Engineer:** The focused attention that an engineer would provide in regard to infrastructure needs and the related interface between local sustainability goals cultivates an integrated approach across Town boards and departments and can result in significant progress in developing a uniform approach to roadway design, drainage design, water supply design, and sanitary sewer design. Newburyport and Gloucester are examples of a nearby municipalities with a municipal engineer.

**Grants coordinator:** As the public focus on the impacts of climate change continues to grow, there has been an expansion of funding available to support local initiatives, both for planning and capital expenditures. A grants coordinator would be responsible for investigating and developing proposals for public and private funding opportunities as well as coordinating and administering grant funding awards.



Ipswich Museum Bell,  
Judith Schneider



Bakers Pond,  
Ingrid Miles



# GOAL 2 REDUCED CONSUMPTION AND EMISSIONS

Conserve water, reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and increase the use of renewable energy.

## STRATEGIES

### *a. Continue to improve Ipswich's overall water system resiliency and conservation, as identified in the Town's 2020 Water Neutral Growth Plan recommendations.*

Ipswich has partnered with both the EPA's WaterSense Program and the regional Greenscapes North Shore Coalition Program. Smart meters have been installed for 100% of Water Department customers and monthly billing has been established to help customers better understand their water usage.

Expand the current water resiliency and conservation program, including the Water Use Mitigation Program (WUMP), the Drought Management Plan, partnering with the State to conduct an American Water Works Association Audit, utilizing water-reduction tools available through the Smart Meter system, and eliminating the use of water bleeders as part of the water main replacement program.

Identify additional funding sources for water conservation projects such as the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) long term-low cost supplemental loans for regionally and nationally significant projects.

Add new programs and capacity by forming an inter-disciplinary ad hoc committee to create a Water Supply Resiliency and Conservation Action Plan. Optimize the use of the Greenscapes North Shore Coalition, the Parker-Ipswich-Essex Rivers Partnership, and the regional Ipswich River Task Force.

Periodically reassess the feasibility, including permitting, of implementing an alternative discharge location for treated wastewater to assist in replenishing the Ipswich and Parker watersheds.

#### Resources/More Information:

- [EPA WaterSense Program](#)
- [Greenscapes North Shore Coalition](#)
- [Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act \(WIFIA\)](#)
- [Parker-Ipswich-Essex Rivers Partnership](#)
- [American Water Works Association Audit](#)

### *b. Expand public access to tools, outreach, and education regarding system demand and capacity related to stormwater management, wastewater, and drinking water.*

In a community with a seasonal influx of visitors and renters, the overarching water quality and conservation goals of the greater community may not be fully understood. As the largest shellfish producer in Massachusetts, Ipswich's economic vitality is linked to its vulnerable coastal areas where shellfish are harvested. These areas are known to close after significant storm events as runoff, carrying fecal matter and other pollutants, washes into the creeks and marshes.<sup>4</sup>

Efforts to improve the water quality and reduce stormwater runoff, such as those mentioned elsewhere in this Resilient and Sustainable Services and Infrastructure section, will help protect these critical natural resources.

Increase staff capacity to implement and coordinate a variety of public access and outreach initiatives to foster a culture of awareness and civic responsibility in regard to water use, such as:

- Provide residents with real time access to resource consumption, for example smart water meter information.
- Conduct training for residents on how to detect and fix a leaking pipe or fixture.
- Establish a "Fix a Leak Week" campaign through the EPA WaterSense program to establish mutual responsibility and awareness.
- Organize and plan a water-smart landscape design competition, featuring the use of native plants and water conserving design.



### *c. Strive to develop a successful local Circular Economy, driven by values of equity, transparency, diversity, and inclusion.*

Overarching goals of a Local Circular Economy are to design out waste and pollution, keep products in use, regenerate natural systems, and increase local human knowledge and capacity around circular economy practices.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 10 percent of all plastics produced yearly end up in the ocean. It is estimated that nearly 22 percent of landfilled material is food waste that could be composted, 13 percent is paperboard

products, and 19 percent is plastics. Reducing the demand for plastics is a key component to addressing this global issue which now affects quality of life in all coastal communities.

Support and encourage businesses to reduce waste and to transition to biodegradable packaging. The Town of Ipswich offers curbside recycling to Town Center businesses that do not have enough space or volume to recycle on their own. However, plastic is usually able to be recycled only once, so reduction is the most direct way to eliminate the many adverse effects of plastic. Work collaboratively and support local partnerships such as with the Department of Public Works, the Waste Reduction Committee, and schools to reduce business packaging and encourage use of biodegradable packaging.

Promote our community composting program to reduce waste and, in turn, reduce waste disposal (garbage) expenses to the community. Consider ways to better subsidize the composting program for residents. Identify ways to offset program costs and fees.

Formalize this proactive stance to promote businesses to become circular, community -focused and financially sustainable with the ultimate goal of local circular economy systems.

#### Resources/More Information:

- [The Story of Plastic website includes campaigns for corporate responsibility and public policies solutions as well as a Zero Waste Master Plan toolkit.](#)
- [The Circular Economy Tool Kit provides information about the circular economy benefits and resources](#)
- [The MassDEP Municipal Waste Reduction Toolkit has four modules including Module 4: Promoting Recycling to Local Businesses](#)
- [MassDEP also has a program called RecyclingWorks that provides recycling assistance to help businesses and institutions reduce waste and maximize recycling, reuse, and food recovery opportunities](#)

<sup>4</sup> Town of Ipswich. 2019. Climate Resiliency Building Report.



<sup>5</sup> Edwards, Devin, "Green Houses and Greenhouse Gases: Why Exclusionary Zoning is a Climate Catastrophe," Georgetown Public Policy Review, November 5, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Kuhn, Sally, Ipswich Wicked Local, "[Ipswich Vote Favors Locally Produced Electricity](#)," March 12, 2019.

***d. Expand upon current sustainability standards for new construction and rehabilitation to help achieve the Town's Green Community energy use reduction goals.***

The Town recognizes the impact of land use planning on promoting sustainable development. One of the largest greenhouse gas-emitting industries in the United States is the residential building sector.<sup>5</sup> Carbon emissions and water consumption are both substantially lower for multifamily housing in walkable neighborhoods than for auto-dependent, single-family homes.

In February 2020, Ipswich was designated as a Green Community by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Town is one of 271 municipalities that have earned this designation by pledging to cut energy<sup>6</sup> use and meeting other criteria established by the Green Communities Act.

Ipswich has the sixth highest residential solar capacity compared to other Massachusetts communities. In 2019, Ipswich's Electric Light Department (ELD) began favoring locally produced, renewable energy. The ELD's 2020 Annual Report includes multiple strategic goals including to prioritize long-term agreements that prescribe carbon-free resources.

Expanding the current sustainability standards for new construction and rehabilitation can help meet the Town's Green Community energy use reduction goal of 20 percent over five years. Section X.C.12 of the Ipswich Zoning Bylaw currently requires that site plans for new developments provide reasonably adequate provisions for "energy, water and resource efficient design, such as appropriate building orientation, landscape design, use of solar or other energy collection apparatuses, electric vehicle charging stations, LED light fixtures and use of resource-efficient materials and energy- and water- efficient systems."

Expand on the current zoning provisions to adopt Green Building performance criteria and standards. The International



***Getting the built-environment and the Town's infrastructure right will go a long way when combined with the Town's historic assets. The physical environment and historic elements within will attract tourism and businesses. People prefer not to work in nor travel to physically unattractive towns or cities." - CDP Goals Survey Respondent, Spring 2020***

Green Construction Code (IGCC) provides a comprehensive set of requirements intended to reduce the negative impact of buildings on the natural environment. As part of this effort, continue to provide financial incentives and connect homeowners, renters, and developers with information about existing energy-efficiency options, programs, local contractors, and tax incentives.

To the extent permitted by law, consider adopting a zoning bylaw in Ipswich that limits expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure for construction seeking site plan review, special permits, or subdivision approval.<sup>7</sup> New municipal construction in Ipswich must already comply with LEED Energy Code standards.

**Resources/More Information:**

- Additional guidance and leadership can be found through [Whole Building Design Guide](#) and the US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) as well as the Green Building Initiatives (GBI) and the international Green Construction Code.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2019, Brookline became the first Town in Massachusetts to ban fossil fuel use in new construction and major building rehabilitation, however the Massachusetts Attorney General struck down this law in July 2020 due to conflicts with state building and gas codes.

***e. Increase the number of electric-vehicle charging stations in public locations.***

Recent market demand forecasting reports predict that the demand for electric vehicles is expanding by more than 30 percent in 2020<sup>8</sup>. Along with that expansion is the need for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Although current research indicates that more than 80 percent of vehicle charging occurs at home, with increased demand, both workplace and public charging stations will be critical to support increased use of electric vehicles.

The Ipswich zoning bylaw currently requires new private developments to provide one electric vehicle charging station at Level 2 or greater for every fifteen new parking spaces.

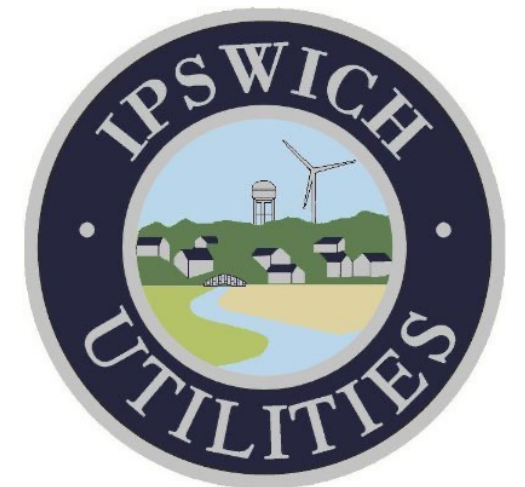
In addition to continuing this requirement for new developments, create a plan to install EV charging stations in public locations, including the Town Center. Publicly available EV charging stations may incentivize patronage at local businesses and illustrate environmental leadership.

**Resources/More Information:**

The [Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program \(MassEVIP\)](#) is a state incentive program available to public, private, and non-profit employers that provides up to 60 percent of funding up to \$50,000 to acquire electric vehicle charging stations for workplaces with a minimum of 15 employees.

<sup>7</sup> Fisher, Jenna, Brookline Patch, "[MA Attorney General Strikes Down Brookline Ban on Fossil Fuels](#)," July 21, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.marketindustryreports.com..>





***f. Leverage electrification incentives for private properties and enhance resiliency of the Town's electric distribution system to work towards full electrification by 2040 and conversion of the electric supply to renewable resources.***

Research forecasts that a commitment made on the national level for “Full Electrification” and conversion of the electric supply to renewable resources by the year 2050 would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70 percent. The efficiency of electric appliances has increased significantly and hot water heaters and building heating systems are candidates for beneficial electrification. Current heat pump technology now allows for more effective systems in colder climates.

Accessing and deploying current technology standards and equipment is important. Promoting expanded use of electric for heating, cooling, and other appliances in private properties, thereby increasing community reliance on electric, may require corresponding Town actions to ensure consistent and uninterrupted service, particularly during cold weather storm events.

**Private properties:**

- Promote and utilize Mass Save and the Commonwealth Energy Tool for Savings ([energyCENTS](#)) which address heating, cooling, lighting, appliances, weatherization, air source heat pumps/mini split systems.
- Facilitate energy assessments for owners, landlords and renters
- Create a formal Town initiative outlining Strategic Electrification as a municipal objective and develop outreach explaining the benefits of this commitment.

**Town-wide Electric Distribution System:**

- Explore methods to enhance the resiliency of the electric distribution system, such as underground conduits for electric service and a large-scale battery storage system capable of providing portions of the Town with power during severe weather events.

**Resources/More Information:**

- [Case study:](#) In 2017, Sterling, Massachusetts pioneered the use of a battery system capable of storing 3.9 megawatts of electricity for reserve power as well as reducing outsourced power demand under peak conditions
- [Mass Save and the Commonwealth Energy Tool for Savings \(energyCENTS\)](#)
- [Environmental and Energy Study Institute](#)

Russel Orchard,  
Stoney Stone





GOAL 3

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION FOR CLIMATE-RESILIENCY

Protect open space and natural resources, including the Ipswich River and its watershed, the Great Marsh, beaches and dunes, clam flats, forests, wildlife habitat, and other critical ecosystems.

STRATEGIES

a. Protect and preserve critical areas for water supply protection, wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, agriculture, and shellfish production.

A sustainable approach to maintaining a balance between the interwoven aspects of natural areas, agriculture and aquaculture activities requires a continued commitment to coordinated planning and conservation effort. The Town’s Open Space Bond initiatives have helped shape and preserve the scenic character of the Town and direct involvement by the community in land protection contributes to community resiliency.

Ensure the Open Space Program has support to coordinate and maintain contact with interconnected initiatives, organizations, and individuals. Create updated resource and parcel mapping to identify commonalities on strategic parcels of land and work to expand dialogues with landowners and land trusts.

Sustain funding for open space acquisition and protection through the Open Space Bond or other funding mechanisms. Taxation structure and farmland successional planning are often central issues and key determinants shaping the future disposition of forests and agricultural lands, and these issues often require enhanced coordination and a long-term planning commitment.

Assess the costs and benefits of development verses protection and conservation to help inform priorities and decisions on a case-by-case, parcel-by-parcel basis. Take measures to advocate for and leverage public/private partnerships to continue to protect sensitive areas and resources in the community.

b. Educate and increase advocacy for policies that protect Ipswich’s natural resources and ecosystems, such as drinking water protection, flood control, pollution attenuation, and wildlife management.

Coordinate between municipal programs and regional organizations and partners to host on-site events for members of the public to gain an appreciation of the natural resources and wildlife in Ipswich. Events could include guided nature walks which aim to educate members of the public about the importance of preserving natural resources and protecting the ecosystem.

c. Use Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for stormwater management, flood storage and protection, and erosion control and land management best practices.

The overarching goal of implementing NBS is to direct public investment toward projects that will serve to reduce anticipated future losses due to disasters, reduce infrastructure maintenance needs and possibly eliminate or defer investment in new ‘gray infrastructure’ and the associated financial burdens.

Create a formal initiative to educate local officials and community members about the limitations of the existing gray infrastructure network. As part of this initiative, educate that NBS offer solutions to emerging infrastructure and public safety challenges and may represent a way to bring enhanced value to the community and natural environment concurrently.

Develop an inventory and analysis of the Town-owned properties to evaluate the opportunities to implement NBS solutions. The inventory should include municipal properties to identify those best suited to provide opportunity for NBS solutions as required by the Town’s MS4 Permit.

Prioritize capital improvement projects to direct public investment in NBS solutions.

Resources/More Information:

- [Federal Emergency Management Administration \(FEMA\). Building Community Resilience with Nature Based Solutions: A Guide for Local Communities in 2020](#)
- [Boston Public Schools \(BPS\) Green Infrastructure Project](#). BPS worked with the Boston Water and Sewer Commission to install nature-based solutions including a public bioretention facility, a synthetic turf field surrounded by tree filters, a stormwater park, a medicinal garden and green roof, and enhanced tree trenches and pervious pavement.

d. Support local farmers and clammers with technical assistance, resource protection, and local regulations that protect farming and farmers.

The farming and shellfish industries in Ipswich are important components of the community’s natural resource-based economy. The economic strength of these industries is intricately tied to natural resource protection for climate resiliency because of their reliance on the health and availability of land for farming and natural shellfish habitats.

Shellfishing and farming are also cornerstones of Ipswich’s history, identity and sense of place and the Town should prioritize supporting its local farmers and clammers. In 2010, Ipswich became a “Right to Farm” community which protects farmers against nuisance lawsuits. The Town should assess how current regulatory and permitting processes could be further streamlined to support farmers. The 2010 Ipswich Agricultural Study notes that farmers had expressed frustration with permits and regulation, especially as they move from production to processing.

The Town should also work with the Agricultural Commission to provide informational materials for farmers and clammers regarding their rights and the regulatory and permitting process. In addition, provide educational materials for residents, visitors, and local officials to help them understand the importance of this legacy in Ipswich.

Coordinate with the Visitors Bureau and a newly-formed Tourism Committee (see Goal 9, Strategy a) to help promote local farms, farm experiences, and locally-produced food and drinks.









# 4

## Responsive and Diverse Development



The Three Sisters on High Street, Stoney Stone

### CORE VISION THEME

New housing and business development continue to be concentrated in walkable areas, including Town Center and near the train station. Not only is new development sustainable, it pays special attention to the Town's historic character, natural green spaces, walkability, and access to services.

The Town's housing stock in 2035 is a mix of apartments, condominiums, and single-family houses that can accommodate a range of socially and economically diverse households, including young adults, older adults, large families, and people with disabilities.

Diverse commercial development offers new amenities, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and increases the Town's commercial tax base. Existing major employers continue to adapt, innovate, and grow with supportive regulations in place, such as streamlined permitting, flexible zoning, and transportation connectivity. There is a useful mix of businesses that capitalize on seasonal tourism as well as businesses that provide year-round services, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and visitors.

### GOALS

#### 4 RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICE

Provide a range of housing choices to foster a socio-economically diverse community and to reflect the changing residential preferences and needs in our state, region, and local community. Recognizing that new housing can impact existing residents, invest in quality-of-life improvements to neighborhoods such as parking solutions and better multi-modal infrastructure including sidewalks, safe crossings, and sidewalk snow clearing.

#### 5 SMART HOUSING LOCATIONS

Create new housing options in neighborhoods near shops and services and supported by public water and sewer, strong schools, and welcoming community.

#### 6 DIVERSE AND THRIVING ECONOMIC BASE

Cultivate a diverse economic base that supports a strong local economy including a vibrant eco-tourism and "Blue Economy" as well as existing businesses, particularly small businesses.



GOAL 4

RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICE

Provide a range of housing choices to foster a socio-economically diverse community and to reflect the changing residential preferences and needs in our state, region, and local community. Recognizing that new housing can impact existing residents, invest in quality-of-life improvements to neighborhoods such as parking solutions and better multi-modal infrastructure including sidewalks, safe crossings, and sidewalk snow clearing.

STRATEGIES

*a. Expand education and advocacy efforts to promote creation of more diverse housing options including affordable housing options.*

Update and enhance educational materials to support a renewed housing campaign that could include the creation of graphic and easy-to-read flyers, pamphlets, and other informational materials to distribute—as well as hosting workshops to share data on local and regional housing needs and provide information on upcoming affordable housing projects and proposals. This work can also spread awareness of Ipswich’s changing demographics, fair housing issues and laws, and existing housing assistance programs including the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

To support these endeavors, the Town should seek grants to assist Ipswich in communicating fact-driven data about the housing needs of its residents, such as through Massachusetts Housing Partnership, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), MassHousing and other statewide technical assistance providers.

*b. Strengthen the Inclusionary Zoning provisions to promote unit production.*

Ipswich’s inclusionary housing zoning regulations, as currently structured, encourage developers to make in-lieu payments to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, however the payments are too low to support the creation of affordable housing units. Revise the inclusionary zoning provisions to emphasize creation of on-site or off-site units as the Town’s preferred options and in-lieu payments as a secondary, but not preferred, option.

*c. Seek designation as an AARP “Age-Friendly Community” to advance local efforts to help people of all ages and abilities live easily and comfortably in the community.*

Led by the Council on Aging, the Town should seek designation as an American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) “Age-Friendly Community” to tap into its many benefits to support an aging demographic and create a more livable community for people of all ages and abilities. This program, sponsored by the World Health Organization and AARP, would make the Town eligible for funding to support housing and other related factors including transportation, communication, and socialization.

After becoming a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, work closely with AARP

representatives to establish a commission or other group, conduct a community needs assessment, develop an action and evaluation plan, and implement the goals of the plan. This can include connecting income-eligible senior homeowners to existing programs that assist with housing costs, improvements, maintenance needs, and house-sharing match-up programs.

*d. Restructure and expand the existing local first-time homebuyer programs to assist lower-income households most in need.*

Over the last decade, the median sales price of single-family homes has risen, while the purchasing power for household income has declined. The Ipswich Housing Partnership and Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board currently operate two programs targeted to homeowners, including a First-time Buyers Loan Program and a Home Rehabilitation Loan Program. The first-time buyers loan program currently targets households earning 80 percent or less than the area median income (AMI). But a household of four earning 80 percent of the AMI (\$96,250) earns more than Ipswich’s median income (\$80,829). Consider restructuring the first-time homebuyer program to provide deeper subsidies to households that need it most and tie the maximum purchase price to the housing market to ensure a viable program.

*e. Expand the capacity of the Town to implement housing initiatives and produce housing units.*

The Town, with expanded capacity, can increase its ability to reach its housing goals. Two primary ways the Town should expand capacity are to increase the level of funding for the Affordable Housing Trust and to increase its part-time housing coordinator to a full-time position.

A housing coordinator is instrumental to provide the technical assistance and knowledge to coordinate the implementation of the Town’s Housing Production Plan or other housing

strategies, including local initiatives and regulatory strategies, in addition to advising on housing development proposals and monitoring existing units. In addition, a full-time housing coordinator could provide essential support to ensure qualifying units are properly listed on the state’s Subsidized Housing Inventory to count toward the Chapter 40B 10 percent goal for affordable housing.

In addition, to produce more affordable housing units, such as by funding mission-based and non-profit development, the Trust will require more capital. There are three primary possibilities to increase the Trust’s revenue stream.

- 1. Increase the payment-in-lieu formula in the Town’s inclusionary zoning provisions.
- 2. Adopt the Community Preservation Act and dedicate 10 percent or more of funds to the Housing Trust Fund.
- 3. Petition the General Court to allow Ipswich to establish a real estate transfer tax on higher-priced residential properties to fund the Housing Trust.

*f. Work with the Ipswich Housing Authority to explore opportunities to expand its stock of affordable units and support the organization’s development and management capacity.*

Consider allocating Housing Trust funds to the Ipswich Housing Authority or its development partners to acquire units or land to create permanently affordable units that are owned by the Housing Authority and eligible for inclusion on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), including housing for low-income and senior households. These units could be developed, possibly in collaboration with a local development partner, managed, and overseen by the Ipswich Housing Authority.

Additionally, the Town could support the Housing Authority to consider creating additional new units on existing Housing Authority properties with feasibility studies or other predevelopment work.



***g. Repurpose underutilized parcels, including Town owned and tax foreclosed property, for the creation of affordable or mixed-income housing options.***

The Town should continue to actively maintain and regularly vet a current list and map of Town-owned and tax-foreclosed properties that may have potential for affordable/mixed-income housing, particularly very-low-income rental units for seniors and accessible units.

Potential developments could be 100 percent affordable to low- and moderate-income (LMI) households or a mix of units affordable to various income levels, including LMI households, middle-income households, and market-rate units.

Development of the site could be overseen by the Ipswich Housing Trust, Housing Authority, or other developers with a track record of context-sensitive affordable housing developments. To implement this strategy, the Town (or other housing entity, as described below) would issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the disposition of municipal or trust property (under MGL's Chapter 30B municipal property disposition requirements) with a specified number or percentage of affordable units and targeted income levels.

The Town-owned sites currently used for the Police and Fire Stations may merit further investigation regarding development feasibility. The Housing Focus Groups discussed these sites as potential reuse/redevelopment sites for mixed-use and/or multifamily housing, when/if new facilities are built in the future.

***h. Amend zoning to explicitly permit congregate housing and co-living, including in the Great Estate Preservation Development and Open Space Preservation (Cluster) zoning provisions.***

Congregate housing, a shared living environment that integrates housing and supportive services aimed at elders

and disabled individuals, is often created by converting larger single-family homes. Congregate housing facilities differ from nursing homes, assisted living, or other institutional environments in that they create a stable environment for supportive independent living and they do not have 24-hour care.

Another example of shared living are contemporary co-living spaces that provide group living opportunities where residents share common areas and amenities and do not usually provide supportive services.

Use the amendments to promote the reuse of existing larger estate houses and accessory buildings, such as the Town's Great Estates, to create affordable and mixed-income housing. A "Great Estate" is defined in the Town's Great Estate Preservation Development (GEPD) zoning provision as an architecturally-significant residence constructed before 1948.

Congregate and co-living amendments can also be integrated into Ipswich's Open Space Preservation Zoning (OSPZ) that already promotes cluster housing and open space conservation.

“

***I do think we need to maintain the diversity Ipswich is known for, not create a lopsided upper class of people who can afford the big new houses going in.”***  
***- CDP Goals Survey Respondent, Spring 2020***

***i. Provide more flexibility to create Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and allow the creation of tiny houses or other small detached accessory units.***

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), tiny houses, and other small-scale housing options allow communities to incrementally increase the number of units without increasing the building footprint. ADUs can either be a second small dwelling unit on the same property, such as tiny house in the backyard (detached), or an apartment within a single-family house, such as carriage house or basement apartment (attached).

Allowing for this type of housing near the Town Center and other locations could increase the number of residents who could walk to goods, services, and other activities. It can also make larger existing properties more affordable, increase the number of affordable residential units in or near the Town Center, and preserve the historic community character. For example, consider the removal of the Special Permit requirement for ADUs that do not increase the footprint of the principal building, or the addition of the ability to construct "tiny houses" as small detached accessory units.



1634 Timber Frame at  
Old Town Hall - 2009  
Community Building  
Community Project,  
Daniel Bates



## GOAL 5

## SMART HOUSING LOCATIONS

Create new housing options in neighborhoods near shops and services and supported by public water and sewer, strong schools, and welcoming community.

## STRATEGIES

***a. Adopt a 40R Smart Growth Overlay District with associated design guidelines to generate well-designed Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) with mixed-income housing near the train station.***

The state's Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District Act (referred to here as Chapter 40R) was originally enacted to encourage communities to create dense residential or mixed-use zoning overlay districts near transit stations and in city and Town centers. Chapter 40R provides financial incentives for communities to establish Smart Growth Overlay Zoning Districts and bonus payments for units constructed as a result of the greater density afforded in the districts.

There are underutilized parcels in the vicinity of the train station and EBSCO currently zoned to allow multifamily at higher density with special permit, including the town parking lot. These sites could be redeveloped with street level parking for commuters and multifamily housing constructed overhead (also reducing flood risk). As businesses move towards more remote work, consider repurposing office buildings in Town Center for future housing.

***b. Create an area vision plan and consider zoning amendments to allow mixed-use commercial and residential development along Route 1.***

The parcels surrounding Route 1 (Newburyport Turnpike), which runs north-south through the western side of Ipswich, are zoned as Limited Industrial or Planned Commercial.

Residential development, including mixed-use, are not allowed in either of these zones but there are four parcels currently being used for residential use. Of Ipswich's four commercial areas, Route 1 has the largest percentage of vacant land (11.5 percent)—a total of 8 parcels (33 acres).

An area vision plan should engage the community to create a vision for the corridor and consider future uses and improvements for the area. Consider zoning changes to allow mixed-use development north of Linebrook Road. This would protect the Town's commercial tax base but open opportunities for additional residential development.

***c. Amend lot size and dimensional requirements for neighborhoods that are walkable to Town Center to permit contextually-sensitive infill development and allow adaptive reuse of existing houses.***

Many of the existing houses within a half mile of Town Center are located on lots that are smaller than the minimum lot size currently required by the zoning bylaw. This is quite common in older, traditional and often historic neighborhoods because the neighborhoods largely predate zoning. These neighborhoods often have many non-conforming properties and could not be built today under current zoning. Having a status of non-conforming limits opportunities for existing property owners to alter the use of their property or improve the property with additions and it also limits the use of vacant lots (that may even be virtually the same size as neighboring properties).

To encourage more housing options, including smaller units, the Town should consider reducing lot size and other dimensional requirements in neighborhoods near Town Center to allow compatible infill development of vacant lots and adaptive reuse of existing houses. This strategy, combined with appropriate design review requirements, can also help to preserve the historic and architectural characteristics of these neighborhoods by allowing additional units within the envelope of the building or through sensitive additions as an alternative to tear-down and rebuild options.

***d. Amend zoning in and near Town Center to allow well-designed multi-family and/or mixed-use options by-right with administrative site plan review and design guidelines, rather than by special permit only.***

Mixed-use development with first-floor commercial and residential above is one way to blend residential and commercial development to create active and vibrant spaces. The benefits of this approach include stimulating downtown businesses and enhancing the vibrancy of Town Center.

Residential uses can be integrated sensitively to retain historic neighborhood character. To mitigate traffic, safety, and parking impacts from new development, leverage investment in complete streets improvements from new mixed-use development to provide a variety of transportation choices.

Amend zoning to allow some multi-family and/or mixed-use options by-right in certain zoning districts. This change would require revising the Town's inclusionary zoning provisions—which currently uses special permits as the primary mechanism for implementing the inclusionary zoning requirements.

As part of allowing multifamily and mixed-use development by-right, create design guidelines to encourage new development that complements and reinforces existing residential neighborhood character.



Rain Barrels, Planning Department Archives



## GOAL 6

## DIVERSE AND THRIVING ECONOMIC BASE

Cultivate a diverse economic base that supports a strong local economy including a vibrant eco-tourism and “Blue Economy” as well as existing businesses, particularly small businesses.

## STRATEGIES

***a. Expand the Town’s capacity for economic development by hiring an economic development planner to specialize in long-term planning and marketing Ipswich to future employers.***

Economic development initiatives would benefit from having professional staff dedicated to advancing ideas and programs. Currently, the Town’s economic development initiatives fall under the purview of the Planning and Development Director and the Town Manager. In the past, they have been coordinated by the Economic Development Advocacy Group, a volunteer taskforce formed by the Town Manager.

In addition to coordinating economic initiatives, staff could serve as a point person and liaison between the Town and its businesses, including major employers such as EBSCO and New England Biolabs and small businesses. This person could coordinate and execute many of the strategies here including overseeing the development of an economic development strategic plan, developing programs and resources to support small businesses, surveying local businesses to better understand their needs, and expanding the Town’s visibility as a tourism destination. This position would also be responsible for fielding calls from prospective businesses, brokers, and site selectors looking for space and property in Ipswich.

This position would report to the Planning and Development Director and work closely with the Town Manager and existing local and regional business organizations, including the Ipswich and North Shore Chambers of Commerce and North of Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau.

***b. Create an economic development strategic plan to identify a comprehensive, proactive economic development strategy to support strong fiscal, market, and economic health.***

A strategic economic development plan would allow the Town to develop a comprehensive strategy for the Town’s business growth. In 2014, the Town assessed Town Center’s business mix and retail environment in their 2014 Downtown Assessment. The Town also completed two short-term Economic Development Strategies created by the Economic Development Agency task force in 2015 and 2017. Update these documents to reflect current market trends and conditions and to provide concrete action steps and focus areas to guide the Town’s economic development.

The strategic economic development plan should solicit input from businesses, residents, and other stakeholders and include a market analysis, a land use analysis and recommended zoning changes, and specific transportation, parking, and infrastructure improvements that would best support businesses. The study should complement the vision and recommendations in the Strategic Tourism Plan. As part of this plan, conduct a detailed review of commercial zoning regulations to determine improvements to best support vibrant and adaptable commercial districts.

***c. Capitalize on new and emerging opportunities to strategically position Ipswich as part of the “Blue Economy” in collaboration with the North Shore Blue Economy initiative.***

The Blue Economy is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health. The goal of the North Shore Blue Economy Initiative of UMass Amherst, School of Earth and Sustainability, a regional 10-year initiative, is to build and implement a sustainable and resilient blue economy ecosystem on the North Shore. The Town should actively participate in this initiative, as well as other similar partnerships and projects as they may develop, to support the Town’s strong position in the coastal economy of the North Shore.

**Resources/More Information:**  
[North Shore Blue Economy](#)

***d. Coordinate with business owners, developers, and entrepreneurs to regularly assess and support the needs of existing businesses.***

To support vibrant and differentiated commercial centers and local businesses, it is important to have a solid understanding of needs from the perspective of business owners, developers, and entrepreneurs and to build strong relationships with the business community. This information can improve and guide the Town’s policies to support businesses, such as streetscape or other public infrastructure improvements, parking management strategies, or regulatory policies.

There are multiple tools that can be implemented to maintain a current understanding of needs and to help build strong relationships with business entities. For example, in collaboration with the Ipswich Downtown Roundtable or other relevant entities, the Town could conduct periodic business satisfaction and/or customer satisfaction surveys, hold business roundtables focused on particular current issues, and share results of market studies or other information to assist businesses and create a supportive environment.

***e. Foster and enhance opportunities to partner with local industry leaders to prepare students for career paths, including vocational and agricultural.***

Create opportunities to allow students and young residents to discover opportunities to develop relationships and work for local businesses. This could include hosting or sponsoring soft-skill workshops, career fairs, and networking opportunities to connect students with local business leaders, offering scholarships for students who are interested in returning to Ipswich to work after they graduate, providing internships and job shadowing mentoring programs for students still in the Ipswich school system, and collaborating with the regional vocational and agricultural schools.

Internships can augment what students are learning in classrooms by providing a real-world education and valuable work experience. This could also encourage students to stay in Ipswich or return after attending college.

**Resources/More Information:**

- [HartBeat of Main Street Grant Program](#)
- [North Shore CDC Small Business Technical Assistance Program](#)



Student Boats, Ipswich High School Archives





## Thriving and Attractive Town Center



Ipswich Illumination on Riverwalk, Stoney Stone

### CORE VISION THEME

New housing and business development continue to be concentrated in walkable areas, including Town Center and near the train station. Not only is new development sustainable, it pays special attention to the Town's historic character, natural green spaces, walkability, and access to services.

The Town's housing stock in 2035 is a mix of apartments, condominiums, and single-family houses that can accommodate a range of socially and economically diverse households, including young adults, older adults, large families, and people with disabilities.

Diverse commercial development offers new amenities, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and increases the Town's commercial tax base. Existing major employers continue to adapt, innovate, and grow, with supportive regulations in place, such as streamlined permitting, flexible zoning, and transportation connectivity. There is a useful mix of businesses that capitalize on seasonal tourism as well as businesses that provide year-round services, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and visitors.

### GOALS

7

#### VIBRANT TOWN CENTER

Celebrate and connect the Ipswich River to Town Center with improved and open access, expanded Riverwalk, greater visibility, recreational amenities, and public events. Strengthen Town Center's economic and cultural vibrancy by preserving its historic authenticity and protecting resources from flooding.

8

#### HERITAGE AND ECO-TOURISM

Expand and enhance the characteristics that attract visitors to Ipswich, including its local and regional natural, cultural, and historic environments.

9

#### TOWN CENTER PARKING

Recognizing that Town Center parking fulfills various types of needs, including employee, customer, resident, overnight, commuter, and long-term parking, develop smarter parking management policies for Town Center and around the commuter rail.



<sup>9</sup> Alpine, Dan Mac, Wicked Local Ipswich: Ipswich dedicates Riverwalk extension, 19 June 2019; <https://ipswich.wickedlocal.com/news/20190619/ipswich-dedicates-riverwalk-extension>.

# GOAL 7

## VIBRANT TOWN CENTER

Celebrate and connect the Ipswich River to Town Center with improved and open access, expanded Riverwalk, greater visibility, recreational amenities, and public events. Strengthen Town Center’s economic and cultural vibrancy by preserving its historic authenticity and protecting resources from flooding.

### STRATEGIES

#### ***a. Create a new Town Center Plan with the Riverwalk as a unifying design element and to improve connections to the Ipswich River.***

The Ipswich River is a defining natural feature running northeasterly from the Town border with Topsfield, winding through Town Center, and into the Ipswich Bay at Little Neck. Historically, the Town Center design evolved with the River at its back, largely disconnected and hidden from view. As recognized in the 2014 Downtown Retail Plan, “. . . The Town Center does not feel as well connected to the Riverwalk as perhaps it could. Town Center users might not know the Riverwalk is just steps away and Riverwalk users might not be encouraged to venture from the Riverwalk into the commercial area.”

However, in recent decades the community has recognized the river not just as a natural and scenic asset, but as a potential economic asset and unifying design element that can help enliven Town Center as a destination and enhance its cohesion.

To realize this vision, the Town has allocated local funds and worked collaboratively with private partners including EBSCO, the Rotary Club, and others to create and expand the Riverwalk including the most recent expansion. The Town completed Phase I of this expansion in 2019, which runs along the back of the EBSCO parking lot and ends opposite the historic Choate Bridge (c.1764), just shy of Market Street. Designs are complete for Phase II of the extension (about 200 feet), which would extend the walk to Market Street with a public easement.<sup>9</sup>

The Town should continue efforts to negotiate with private property owners to pursue Phase II to expand the Riverwalk. In addition, the Town should undertake a Town Center planning initiative that has a strong urban design focus, including design concepts for a multipurpose placemaking area to transform the existing privately-owned parking area behind businesses on Market Street.

This multipurpose area should be designed in close collaboration with the business community and property owners to meet business parking needs as well as for public enjoyment of the Ipswich River as a pocket park to extend the Riverwalk. Such a multipurpose area should incorporate Nature-Based Solutions for stormwater management that improve resilience to protect the area and businesses from flooding events. In addition, encourage business owners to open up and improve rear entrances accessible to the reimagined parking area.

The Town should also expand the Riverwalk from Green Street to the Town Wharf. This connection can provide many public benefits including helping to address traffic and safety issues on Water Street.

#### ***b. Support and strengthen the organizations that serve to fund improvements and promote businesses in Town Center.***

There are existing entities that serve as advocates and organizers for the Town Center and work in collaboration, including the Ipswich Business Roundtable, Cultural District,

and the Chamber of Commerce. A Main Streets Organization would be another such entity that could potentially serve as an umbrella organization to provide coordination. A Main Street Organization is a National Program that is a private voluntary membership entity that fundraises but does not impose any fees or taxes on property or business owners.

Even without a Main Street Organization, the existing Town Center entities could use the four-point Main Street approach focusing on: economic vitality, design, promotion, and organization.



#### **Resources/More Information:**

- [Main Street America](#) supports local Main Street organizations and has many resources including its publication “[The Future of Retail: Creative Approaches to Place-Based Entrepreneurship](#).”
- [Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grants provide funds for a wide variety of strategies related to Town Center revitalization efforts](#)

#### ***c. Seek a Massachusetts Cultural District designation for the area around the Town Center to bring together and promote Ipswich’s business, arts and cultural institutions, and historic organizations.***

A Cultural District is a walkable, compact, and easily identifiable geographic area with a concentration of cultural facilities, activities, and assets. Cultural Districts have four main goals—attracting artists and cultural enterprises, encouraging economic development and enhancing property values, establishing the district for tourism purposes, and fostering local cultural development and historic preservation. Municipalities with a Cultural District are eligible for funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Consider creating a Cultural District in the Town Center area and along areas of the river that highlights local arts and cultural organizations and businesses and celebrates its collection of historic First Period and Second Period homes and connection to the Ipswich River. Consider the possibility of using the Elm Street parking lot for events if the Police station is relocated. Several North Shore communities have Cultural Districts that could serve as a model and resource for Ipswich, including Essex, Newburyport, and Gloucester.

#### **Resources/More Information:**

[Mass Cultural Council](#)

#### ***d. Work with the arts community to develop and install public art throughout the Town Center and along the Riverwalk at the Ipswich River and develop a Public Art Plan.***

Temporary and permanent public art installations can be a crucial economic development and community building tool. Work with the Town’s cultural council to promote local artists, install public art in the Town Center and along the Riverwalk. Public art could include more traditional ideas, like memorials, murals, or outdoor sculptures, as well as events and performance art. Art could also be functional and integrated into wayfinding signage; benches and other street furniture; or transportation sites, such as bus stops or bike racks.

Develop a Public Art Plan to catalyze and prioritize projects. Work with local artists, local galleries such as Hall-Haskell House Gallery, existing partners like Sculpture in Open Spaces, and/or with local school children to develop pieces. Public art projects can be funded through local Cultural Council funding and art solicited through a “call for artists” to ensure a fair and transparent selection process. Designation as a state Cultural District could also provide funding for a variety of efforts to support artists and artistic initiatives to promote the district.

#### **Resources/More Information:**

[Massachusetts Cultural Council – Public Art Planning](#)



<sup>10</sup> A. Town of Ipswich - Design Review Board. "Steps and Standards for the Design Review Process" (accessed August 2020).  
<sup>11</sup> Ipswich Hammatt Street Lot Parking Study, MAPC, June 2018.

***e. Update design standards and guidelines and strengthen the Design Review Board to ensure that new Town Center development is compatible with the Town’s goals.***

The Town has separate design standards and guidelines for new construction or rehabilitation in addition to the Ipswich Town Character Statement, Ipswich Facade Improvement Program, and the Architectural Preservation District guidelines. The Town also has a Design Review Board that meets on an as-needed basis to review community facility, commercial, industrial or business buildings which require Planning Board site plan review or special permit approval. The Design Review Board also meets to review any new construction, exterior alteration or expansion of buildings associated with a Great Estate Preservation Development special permit application or special permit applications for multifamily dwellings or development.

Updated standards and design guidelines could incorporate graphic illustrations and diagrams as well as standards to encourage sustainable design including incorporation of renewable energy systems such as solar panels. Updated standards and guidelines can help to create design outcomes for new development and rehabilitation and provide



High Spirits – Chris Williams Sculpture, ReCreation & Culture Archives

transparency and predictability for developers, builders, and Town projects.

In addition, expanding the Design Review Board’s (DRB) role could help encourage development that reinforces existing neighborhood characteristics. Currently, the DRB’s review is limited to buildings<sup>10</sup>, but it could be expanded to include more types of development as well as other site planning considerations. Having an active group of design professionals providing technical support and design advice to Town staff and other board and committee members could enhance the aesthetic character of development.

**Resources/More Information:**  
[Hinshaw, Mark, FAICP and Morris, Marya, FAICP, American Planning Association PAS Report 591: Design Review: Guiding Better Development, July 2018.](#)

***f. Consolidate parcels and invest in placemaking improvements at the Hammatt Street Parking Lot to enhance the district experience and draw people to Town Center’s restaurants, shops, and other businesses.***

Public placemaking and public realm amenities, such as public courtyards, gathering spaces, and pocket parks, activate public areas and make them more inviting and livelier for pedestrians and help to enliven business districts.

One key opportunity site is the Hammatt Street parking lot which the Town should reimagine and transform to create a greened public space that encourages interaction with areas for social gathering in addition to providing parking. The site, which provides 270 parking spaces, is centrally located in the heart of Town Center and consists of multiple parcels with eleven distinct property owners.<sup>11</sup>



Take-Out Terrace 2020  
EBSCO Parking Lot, 4  
Union Street, Planning  
Department Archives

## LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

Businesses and property owners experienced significant economic impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Town undertook many initiatives to support the health of local businesses and provide opportunities for social interaction during the time of the pandemic and learned from trends and challenges:

- 1 Successfully worked with the business community to utilize the public realm for private uses including restaurants repurposed parking spaces on Market Street for outdoor dining.
- 2 Created popular tented gathering spaces on the EBSCO parking lot on the river’s edge, town green, and the Winthrop School front lawn. Convenient places for people to sit down and enjoy take out, these areas were popular for informal gatherings as well as for formal meetings and events. The Town anticipates continuing to provide flexible outdoor gathering spaces such as these post pandemic.
- 3 Saw the pronounced benefits of publicly-accessible open space and outdoor recreation highlighted during the pandemic both nationwide as well as locally, which highlighted the importance of continued open space conservation efforts and outdoor recreation opportunities. This recognition helps to reinforce the Town’s efforts to invest in conservation and recreation.
- 4 Observed a trend for residents to find relief from isolation by enjoying Town Center outside. Impromptu activities enlivened the street including busking musical groups busking. Enlivening Town Center with outdoor performances as well as other art and cultural activities can be continued and enhanced with the recommendation of securing designation as a Massachusetts Cultural District.
- 5 Embraced a more experimental openness to try some new initiatives as flexible and temporary efforts. Ideas can be tried out temporarily first before deciding on permanence. New traffic patterns though Town Center, such as one-way traffic, closing a street for pedestrians, or utilizing parking spaces for outdoor dining should continue to be explored.
- 6 Successful but demanding effort by Town staff, particularly the one-person department of ReCreation and Culture, indicating the need for additional capacity for future initiatives.



<sup>12</sup>The Ipswich-Essex Explorer suspended service in 2020 due to the COVID-19 health crisis but is expected to resume service in the 2021 season.

<sup>13</sup>Riders can request a stop at Hall-Haskell House/Ipswich Visitor Center but it is not a dedicated stop as part of the route.

The multiple ownership characteristics of the parking lot create significant challenges for a coordinated effort to transform this lot into a multipurpose area. Securing a joint management agreement as recommended is a critical first step (see Goal 10, Strategy b). Longer range, as recommended in the 2018 MAPC Hammatt Street Lot Parking Study, the Town should work to consolidate parcel ownership through acquisition of private parcels or, if this is not possible for all parcels, securing public access easements.

Such consolidation would allow a community reimagining and redesign of the parking area which through installation of public amenities, absorbent landscaping, and other Nature-Based Solutions for stormwater management, could serve as a placemaking and environmental sustainability opportunity and still provide public parking. Encourage business owners to open up and improve rear entrances accessible to the reimagined parking area.

***g. Continue to repurpose public spaces to enhance the business district experience and enliven Town Center.***

Repurposed public spaces, such as for outdoor dining, shopping, and store displays, help to activate public areas. Sidewalk permits let businesses expand onto public property by allowing tables, chairs, benches and planters in the right-of-way.

Analyze current regulations to assess any obstacles and modifying zoning and permitting to maximize flexibility to encourage short-term leases and temporary uses, such as pop-up shops, as needed. Vacant properties are both a financial drain to property owners because they still require ongoing maintenance and upkeep—and can negatively impact the business district experience and atmosphere.

**Resources/More Information:**  
[MA Streets and Spaces Funding](#)

***h. Improve the Town-owned Peatfield Street river launching area to enhance access for non-motorized boats to the Ipswich River and draw more people to spillover to Town Center area as a destination.***

Continue to improve the Town landing and dock at the end of Peatfield Street. The Town owns a parcel that is roughly 0.41 acres that has frontage on Peatfield Street and First Street. The parcel has a small parking area on the Peatfield Street portion of the lot.

The Town should invest in a redesign of the site for a park with improvements to the landing and a dock appropriate for launching non-motorized boats including canoes and kayaks for recreational purposes. Given the site's proximity to the train station (less than a 5-minute walk) and Town Center (a 5 to 10-minute walk to Market/Union Street intersection), such improvements could be a draw for residents and visitors with spill-over potential for Town Center businesses.

***i. Work collaboratively to better promote Ipswich's Town Center and the Riverwalk as a destination for visitors.***

In 2004, the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) began a seasonal weekend shuttle service, called the Ipswich-Essex Explorer, that connects the Ipswich MBTA Station to Crane Beach on the weekends during the summer. Over the last ten years, ridership has increased—mostly people not from the North Shore.<sup>12</sup> Because the route begins and ends in Town Center at the MBTA station, visitors could add time on their trips exploring local businesses and attractions in this area.

Work with CATA to promote activities and attractions in Ipswich's Town Center, such as through their marketing and promotional materials or by adding stops elsewhere in Town Center, such as the Hall-Haskell House<sup>13</sup>, Ipswich Ale Brewery, or closer to East Street where many of Ipswich's historic First Period houses are located.

Consider creating and placing pamphlets, promotional videos, and other materials to advertise all that Town Center has to offer—and improving wayfinding signage for visitors at the pick-up/drop-off spot for the Ipswich-Essex Explorer.

Coordinate with the MBTA, The Trustees, and other partners to optimize tourism opportunities for downtown.



County Street,  
Stoney Stone



## GOAL 8

## HERITAGE AND ECO-TOURISM

Expand and enhance the characteristics that attract visitors to Ipswich, including its local and regional natural, cultural, and historic environments.

## STRATEGIES

***a. Establish a Tourism Committee that includes members of the Cultural Council, the Ipswich Historical Commission, and other related groups.***

Despite having many popular seasonal destinations and the largest collection of pre-1725 homes, Ipswich’s tourism initiatives are currently overseen by one person, the Director of ReCreation and Culture who manages the Visitor Center. A Tourism Committee would support the Director of ReCreation and Culture by working with community groups to promote Ipswich and create a cohesive experience for visitors.

This group would oversee the creation and implementation of a Strategic Tourism Plan as well as other tourism initiatives. This group could include representatives from the Town’s Cultural Council, the Chamber of Commerce, Department of ReCreation and Culture, Ipswich Downtown Roundtable, Historic Ipswich website, the Ipswich Museum, the Town Historian, and other interested community representatives. This could also be a subcommittee of the Economic Development Advocacy Group, depending on how active this group still is. Lexington, Arlington, and Middleborough are some Massachusetts communities with Tourism Committees.

***b. Develop a strategic tourism plan that builds on the economic development strategic plan to create a framework for sustainable heritage and eco-tourism.***

Ipswich is a recognized regional destination with known historic and natural assets. By establishing a cohesive vision for Ipswich as a community and destination, a five-year strategic tourism plan would take Ipswich’s tourism

development to the next level. This plan should be aligned and coordinated with the economic development strategic plan (see Goal 7, Strategy b). The tourism plan would focus on sustainable and economic growth including enhanced public access to the Ipswich River via the Riverwalk and other access points and the beach with goals and action items supported and vetted by residents and businesses.

The plan should identify and confirm which experiences and assets currently drive visitor demand, what sectors are potential growth areas, and any potential barriers to the growth of current and future tourism endeavors. This plan should include planning for accommodations, including analyzing the use of AirBnB and regulations for short-term rentals, transportation, tourist activities, management, other regulations, as well as consistent and comprehensive marketing and promotion. Marketing should tie into the Town’s existing wayfinding signage.

The Town should consider hiring a consultant who specializes in strategic planning and tourism—with their work overseen by the Tourism Committee. The plan should engage visitors, year-round and seasonal residents, business owners, large and small local tourism assets, like the Trustees’ Appleton Farm and Russell Orchards Farm and Winery, and regional partners, such as the Essex National Heritage Area.

Heritage tourism, eco-tourism, and agritourism—Ipswich’s main assets and growing sectors of tourism—benefit from clustering near other similar locations. Heritage tourism capitalizes on a place’s history and its historic assets. The National Trust of Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and

activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past.” It includes museums, historic sites, walking tours, reenactments, genealogy, and heritage festivals, among others.

Agritourism invites visitors to visit farms, orchards, ranches, or other rural agricultural enterprises. This includes experiences like farm stands and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), agricultural education and tours, pick-your-own, hayrides, and horseback riding, among other activities.<sup>14</sup>

The Town could also consider partnering with neighboring communities in the development of the plan to include and promote other experiences and places that focus on heritage and agriculture.

***c. Support existing community partners, such as the Historic Ipswich website, Ipswich Museum, Trustees, Ipswich River Watershed Association, and others, through improved marketing and advertising.***

For visitors, the “Historic Ipswich” [website](#) is the most comprehensive Town-affiliated place to learn about Ipswich’s attractions and destinations. The site is a hybrid of tourism and visitor information and facts about Ipswich’s history and historic resources. It is primarily maintained by the Town’s historian and chair of the Ipswich Historical Commission with some assistance from the Town’s Director of ReCreation and Culture.

The Essex National Heritage Area dedicates a page to attractions in Ipswich and the Trustees advertises its individual sites in Ipswich on its website. Develop a “Visit Ipswich” website managed by the Town—either the Tourism Committee, ReCreation and Culture Director, or Economic Development staff person—that integrates a cohesive marketing campaign built on the “Ipswich as a destination” brand, as developed in Ipswich’s Strategic Tourism Plan.



Appleton Farms CSA  
Peppers, Trustees of  
Reservations Archives

***d. Promote locally produced food, including shellfish, and beverages to capitalize on emerging agritourism and agri-culinary trends.***

Ipswich hosts the annual Cask and Clam festival which promotes the Town’s rich and deep history of fried clams, clam shakes, and clammers—and the more recent influx of microbreweries, vineyards, and meaderies. Consider offering other festivals or events to highlight local farmers, food, and beverages. This could also include reviving the Town’s Farmer’s Market which used to be hosted in Town Center but shut down in 2018 due to limited leadership capacity. It was being run primarily by a group of volunteers. In 2019, there was a pop-up farmer’s market to celebrate the summer solstice.

Ipswich’s Agricultural Commission could also develop an “Ipswich Local” sticker to highlight and promote local food and beverage items sold in the community. This should be synced with the Town’s broader tourism, marketing, and branding efforts.

Agritourism has also been able to weather the COVID-19 health crisis, ongoing at the time of this plan’s development, as the majority of activities and experiences are outside.



# GOAL 9 TOWN CENTER PARKING

Recognizing that Town Center parking fulfills various types of needs, including employee, customer, resident, overnight, commuter, and long-term parking, develop smarter parking management policies for Town Center and around the commuter rail.

## STRATEGIES

**a. Develop consistent parking management through regulations, restrictions, and signage in Town Center, including striped on-street parking spaces and improving parking-related signage and wayfinding.**

Regulated parking times and limits will help to improve vehicle turnover and enforcement. Without consistent posted regulations and enforcement parkers will often park for long periods which reduces the parking supply for other motorists and may discourage them from visiting the area. Uniform signage should include public and private lots and on-street parking. Signage should make parking regulations and wayfinding easy to read and understand. Striping of on-street and off-street spaces formalizes parking areas and helps maximize parking supply.

**b. Create a Joint Management Agreement for the Hammatt Street parking lot to coordinate multiple owners.**

Ownership of the Hammatt Street lot is divided between multiple owners which presents maintenance and management challenge and confusion for visitors.<sup>15</sup> A Joint Management agreement would be established to coordinate the ongoing care, maintenance, and improvement of the lot. For the Town to reconfigure the lot to maximize capacity and improve flow it would need to obtain legal control of the private properties.

**c. Evaluate need for handicap and electric vehicle parking in the Town Center.**

Inventory the existing number and location of handicap spaces in the Town Center. Identify if additional handicap spaces are needed and/or need to be relocated to provide better accessibility to businesses. There are two public electric vehicle charging stations in Town: EBSCO Parking Garage at 84 Union Street and Veteran's Memorial Parking Lot at 44 South Main Street. Inventory and identify the need for additional electric vehicle parking spaces with charging stations in the Town Center.

**d. Advocate the MBTA for secure, covered bicycle parking at train station and provide bicycle racks in the Town Center.**

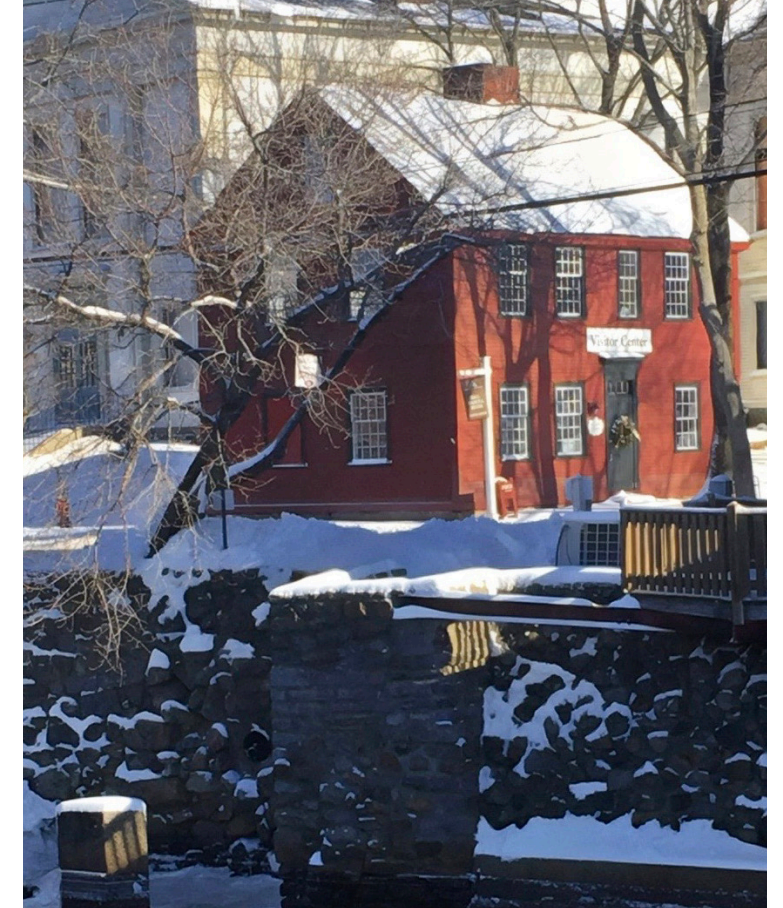
Commuters are more inclined to bike to the train station if they can park their bicycle in a secure, safe, and weather-proof area. Maintenance supplies can also be provided such as an air pump and tools. The Town can coordinate with the MBTA to provide secure covered bicycle parking at the train station. The MBTA provides secured and covered bicycle cages at several train stations.<sup>16</sup> The Town should provide bicycle racks in the Town Center and coordinate with businesses on the location and number.

**e. Review on-street parking standards to better serve the needs of older adults and residents with mobility challenges, such as spaces that are at sidewalk level.**

Review parking space dimensions to better accommodate the aging population. Wider spaces and spaces at sidewalk level can be easier for older residents to exit and enter their vehicle. These measures are being considered in other town centers such as Billerica.

“As workforce shifts to more remote work in response to Covid-19, a shift away from parking downtown and near the train station will actually support climate goals by encouraging walking and biking versus driving.”

- CDP Goals Survey  
Respondent, Spring 2020



Ipswich Visitor Center and Hall Haskell House Gallery, Ipswich Visitor Center Archives





# 6

## Safe and Connected Transportation Network



Town Line, Stoney Stone

### CORE VISION THEME

New housing and business development continue to be concentrated in walkable areas, including Town Center and near the train station. Not only is new development sustainable, it pays special attention to the Town's historic character, natural green spaces, walkability, and access to services.

The Town's housing stock in 2035 is a mix of apartments, condominiums, and single-family houses that can accommodate a range of socially and economically diverse households, including young adults, older adults, large families, and people with disabilities.

Diverse commercial development offers new amenities, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and increases the Town's commercial tax base. Existing major employers continue to adapt, innovate, and grow, with supportive regulations in place, such as streamlined permitting, flexible zoning, and transportation connectivity. There is a useful mix of businesses that capitalize on seasonal tourism as well as businesses that provide year-round services, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and visitors.

### GOALS

10

#### LOCAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Improve and expand the local transportation network to better serve all residents and encourage cleaner and healthier mobility choices, including biking and walking.

11

#### SAFE TRANSPORTATION

Make roads safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, especially in high-traffic areas including Town Center, other commercial areas, and near schools.



# GOAL 10 LOCAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Improve and expand the local transportation network to better serve all residents and encourage cleaner and healthier mobility choices, including biking and walking.

## STRATEGIES

### ***a. Complete and implement Town-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans to improve cycling and walking conditions in Ipswich.***

The Town's 2020 Cycle Safe Task Force could develop further as a standing Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation of the Town's bicycle and pedestrian plans. The committee, comprised of residents, Town staff, and business owners, should strive to develop, improve, and maintain active transportation alternatives for people of all ages and abilities, and serve in an advisory capacity to the Select Board. The committee would evaluate potential improvements and programs and identify methods for funding recommendations. The North Shore Chapter of MassBike is a resource for bicycling education, advocacy, and news.

The plans should be maintained and updated, including assessing the pedestrian sidewalk network to identify gaps in the network and non-ADA compliance and identifying arterial roadways where bicycle facilities are appropriate, such as County Road, Central Street, High Street, and South Main Street. The plans should also evaluate and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and ADA compliance at critical intersections, such as those along County Road and High Street in and near Town Center.<sup>17</sup>

Prioritization of recommendations should be provided in each plan with special attention given to the Town Center, schools, parks and recreation areas, and the commuter train station.

The plans can help strengthen the town's position for funding grants including MassDOT Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School, MassTrails, and other state funds that may be available in the future to provide funding to communities to develop temporary and permanent projects.

Other communities with bicycle and pedestrian plans in the region include: Lynn Walking and Biking Network Plan, 2019, City of Lynn, MA; 2010 Bicycle Circulation Master Plan, City of Salem, MA; City of Beverly Bicycle Network & Pedestrian Priority Plan, January 2015, MAPC. Other communities with bicycle or pedestrian committees in the region include Salem, Manchester-By-The Sea, Beverly, and Danvers.

**Resources/More Information:**  
[MassBike](#)

### ***b. Advance projects identified in the Town's Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and integrate non-motorized transportation improvements into other road reconstruction projects.***

Complete Streets are designed to allow users of all ages and abilities to safely move through a community's transportation network, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. The Town's Complete Streets plan was adopted in 2018 and includes multiple priority projects. Immediate projects to advance should include the pedestrian

improvement projects under construction at Little Neck Road and High Street/Short Street.

Incorporate non-motorized transportation improvements into every road project including proposed major capital projects such as Jeffrey's Neck Road, Argilla Road, Topsfield Road, and High Street improvement projects. Include bike and pedestrian safety as a priority in the design of any public street improvement project.

The Town should apply for construction funding through the MassDOT Complete Streets Tier 3 Infrastructure grant program and other programs to leverage local investments.

### ***c. Adopt Sustainable Neighborhood Road Design through the Ipswich's subdivision road standards to encourage walking, biking, and low impact development.***

The Town can adopt sustainable neighborhood design guidelines that will promote complete streets practices and residential neighborhood character. Guidelines and standards should be developed to provide appropriately scaled roadways that incorporate context-sensitive street network designs that provide dedicated space for pedestrians and bicycles, as well as street trees.

**Resources/More Information:**  
• [MAAPA, Sustainable Neighborhood Road Design: A Guidebook for Massachusetts Cities and Towns, May 2011](#)

Other communities that have developed Sustainable Design Guidelines include:

- [Andover](#)
- [Beverly](#)
- [Lynnfield](#)
- [Salem](#)

“

*We need more safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. Speeding and aggressive drivers on the roads is a serious problem.” – CDP Goals Survey Respondent, Spring 2020*



Nichols Field Trail,  
Planning Department  
Archives

### ***d. Expand the Town's efforts to improve trail accessibility and expand accessible community trails.***

Further the work of the Town's Open Space program to perform inventories of trails to identify and record trailhead locations, wayfinding signage, parking supply, handicap spaces, trail accessibility, conditions of trails, and kiosks and information. Develop recommendations to improve and maintain existing trails and identify potential locations to expand accessible community trails.

**Resources/More Information:**  
[DCR Recreational Trails Program](#)



Work with the pedestrian and bicycling safety and advisory committee(s) to evaluate and develop longer distance trails including a path to Crane’s Beach. Evaluate roads heavily used by walkers, such as Water Street, to consider traffic calming measures such as one-way traffic flow so as to achieve safety improvements. Apply for grants from the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Program and other state and private funding programs. Partner with other organizations in town that manage trails, including the Essex County Trail Association, The Trustees, and the Ipswich River Watershed Association.

***e. Examine need for expanding the existing Town shuttle service.***

The Council on Aging shuttle experienced a 48 percent increase in the number of annual requested rides between FY2018 (411) and FY2019 (609). However, the current need appears to have been addressed by a partnership with Cape Ann Transportation Authority that provides out-of-town medical transportation for the majority of scheduled medical appointments with the remainder being provided by volunteers. As future needs change or increase, the Town should expand the capacity of local transportation options. This might include hiring additional staff, purchasing an additional vehicle, and creating additional parking spaces at Town Hall.

MassDOT provides funding through the Community Transit Grant Program, FTA Section 5310 funds mobility needs of seniors and people with disabilities, and the Mobility Assistance Program funds transportation services of seniors and people with disabilities.

**Resources/More Information:**

MassDOT Community Transit Grant Program:  
<https://www.mass.gov/community-transit-grant-program>

***f. Advocate for expanded regional bus service, such as a shuttle between destinations in other communities shuttle service.***

The Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) currently runs the Ipswich Essex Explorer bus service between the Ipswich train station and Crane Beach and Essex Town center on weekends only. Due to COVID-19 the service has been canceled until 2021. Other existing CATA bus service provided to Ipswich residents includes Dial-A-Ride Service to those over 60 and for adults with a disability; Dialysis Service; and the Ipswich Medical Bus. CATA provides transportation services to Hamilton seniors to Ipswich and other communities in Essex County. The Town can coordinate with CATA to explore options to expand bus service as well as micro-transit (shuttles/vans) alternatives.

The Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA) Regional Transit Plan, June 2015 has recommended a new Ipswich Shuttle that would provide local connections to the Ipswich commuter rail station. It would run along Route 1A/133 and operate as a flex route during peak hours only. The Town can coordinate with CATA to identify shuttle bus ridership potential between Ipswich and surrounding communities.

Appleton Farms,  
Stoney Stone





# GOAL 11

## SAFE TRANSPORTATION

Make roads safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, especially in high-traffic areas including Town Center, other commercial areas, and near schools.

### STRATEGIES

#### *a. Evaluate and improve critical intersections and roadways to enhance safety for all users.*

Road Safety Audits and Walk Audits can be performed at critical intersections with above-average crash rates to identify current safety and accessibility deficiencies and improvement alternatives.

These critical intersections include County Road/South Main Street; County Road/Poplar Street; Main Street/Market Street/Central Street; High Street/Central Street (Lords Square); High Street between Lowes Lane and School Street; Route 133/High Street; County Road between Lanes End and Essex Road; and High Street at Shaw's Plaza.

Road Safety Audits can be funded by MassDOT as part of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Typical measures to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists include pedestrian ramps, countdown and accessible pedestrian signals (APS), rectangular rapid flashing beacons, curb extensions and refuge islands, retroreflective signage and pavement markings, lighting, speed feedback signs, and sight distance improvements.

Improvements are developed to benefit people of all age and abilities. Improvements can be implemented separately or part of a larger corridor or Complete Streets project. As part of the Town's Complete Streets initiatives to improve safety, establish a multi-use bike/pedestrian trail on Argilla Road from Town Center to the beach. The goal is not only safety and sustainable transportation, but also enhancing equitable access for the region to the Town's assets

For larger projects such as the critical intersection of Main Street/Market Street/Central Street, a comprehensive evaluation is needed to develop improvement alternatives. Alternatives may include intersection reconfiguration and control such as signalization and roundabout(s).

A robust outreach effort would be required that would solicit input and feedback from residents, business owners, and stakeholders. The goals of the evaluation would be to identify alternatives that improve safety, circulation, connectivity, and mobility for all modes, while maintain access and parking. MassWorks and ADA funding opportunities may be available.

**Resources/More Information:**  
[Massachusetts Road Safety Audits:](#)

#### *b. Develop a traffic calming policy to guide implementation of measures to improve safety and reduce vehicle speeds, particularly in Town Center and neighborhoods.*

Ipswich Police are committed to efforts to control traffic so as to increase the safety of the community. A traffic calming policy can guide both the Town and residents through a documented process on how to apply for traffic calming improvements and set priorities. Measures can include narrowing roadways, separating vehicles from pedestrians and bicyclists, and reducing pedestrian crossing distance. The Policy will identify traffic thresholds such as volume, speed, and safety that must be met to qualify as a project to

be considered. The Policy would outline the public process and schedule of reviews and approvals. The Policy may include a provision to conduct temporary pilot studies before permanent installation of traffic calming devices.

**Resources/More Information:**  
Several communities have adopted a Traffic Calming Policy including [Salem](#)

#### *c. Continue participation of Middle School, Doyon Memorial School, and Winthrop School in the MassDOT Safe Routes to School Program and apply for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) infrastructure grant to improve safety and connectivity for children walking and biking to school.*

Through this program MassDOT provides education and encouragement programs and funding for infrastructure construction to improve the walking and biking environment for students. The Town can identify improvements needed near schools (in coordination with bicycle and pedestrian plan, see Goal 11, Strategy a) and submit for MassDOT funding. A total of 14 Massachusetts communities received SRTS infrastructure funding in 2019.

#### *d. Assess and implement short and long-term solutions to heavily-travelled roadways that flood, including adaptation of Jeffrey's Neck Road, Argilla Road, and Water Street to prevent storm and tidal flooding.*

In the past 10 years Jeffrey's Neck Road and Argilla Road have been closed several times for more than four hours due to flooding. The Town has received funding and has approved the raising and reconstruction of Jeffrey's Neck Road to begin in 2021. The section to be raised is before Island Park Road, up Island Park and down Jeffrey's Neck to Northridge Road.

The Town has received state grants to design and permit the raising of Argilla Road for approximately one-half mile between Castle Hill and the Crane Beach entrance. The raising of the roads will maintain access at all times for residents, visitors, and emergency services.

Water Street between Green Street and the Town Wharf along the Ipswich River currently floods at a king tide and also receives significant stormwater flooding. Heavily travelled by pedestrians as an extension of the Riverwalk, the road also has heavy traffic in the summer by boat trailers and others.

Improved pedestrian and bicycle accommodations should be provided for these projects.



Market Street,  
Stoney Stone





# Supportive and Inclusive Government and Services



Ipswich Public Library,  
Stoney Stone

## CORE VISION THEME

In 2035, elected leaders, boards and committees, and Town staff work collaboratively to achieve the community's vision and goals, support a diverse population, and provide services in a transparent and equitable manner.

Town boards, committees, and school and municipal employees are gender-balanced and reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the community. Residents with differing opinions are able to problem solve through collaboration and consensus-building. Ipswich's students and overall community members are supported through a variety of educational, extracurricular, and recreational opportunities.

## GOALS

12

### COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Serve and protect all residents, in particular Ipswich's older adults, students, and vulnerable populations.

13

### DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

Elected and appointed Town boards and committees as well as Town employees are gender-balanced and reflect the diverse racial and ethnic composition of the community.



# GOAL 12 COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Serve and protect all residents, in particular Ipswich’s older adults, students, and vulnerable populations.

## STRATEGIES

***a. Better understand the specific service needs of targeted populations in the community as well as those of the general population and ensure programs and communications best meet those needs.***

Some of Ipswich’s residents, including youth, seniors, and other vulnerable populations, may more heavily rely on or require unique services to address their specific needs. These groups are also often harder to reach through traditional planning methods, such as public meetings.

Work with community stakeholders, leaders, and organizations to reach these groups in order to enhance awareness and more deeply understand their needs—and provide them in a manner best suited for the group.

As identified in the 2019 Municipal Vulnerability Plan, Ipswich has a number of societal strengths that can be leveraged, such as its engaged Council on Aging (COA), well-supported and high-performing schools, and a strong network of regional partners to collaborate with on a variety of issues. The Town could complement these efforts by creating an interdepartmental team comprised of members of the Police Force, Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services as well as members from the School Department, Recreation Department, Council on Aging, and the Board of Health to analyze the data and needs to broaden the awareness of those populations within the Town.

Use these findings to structure an approach to most-at-risk populations—connecting them with meaningful community initiatives that build connectivity and lasting value and investment in the community. For example, this could include bolstering out-of-school offerings for teens and creating alternative venues for communication and interaction that are productive.



Council on Aging  
Holiday, COA Archives

***b. Connect residents in coastal hazard zones, particularly those over age 65 and including seasonal or renter-occupied homes, with emergency protocols, local shelters and services, and other resources.***

As highlighted in the Public Infrastructure and Climate Resiliency section of this plan, Ipswich is vulnerable to current and future flooding and storms. Over 43 percent of Ipswich falls in the FEMA 1 percent flood-zone (also known as the 100-year flood zone). Participants in the 2019 Community Resiliency Building Workshop identified a need to improve communication with at-risk residents about climate-related hazards, particularly for seniors, renters, and seasonal residents living in areas vulnerable to coastal flooding and storm surge.

As part of this effort, create a database for at-risk dwellings and occupants in areas with known hazards to better focus the distribution of important messages. Although there are communications and systems currently in place, there will be a need to improve these as flooding, power outages, and other hazard events will likely increase in coming years.

Particularly for populations like renters or seasonal residents who may be less “plugged in” to traditional methods of communication about the community’s affairs, it is critical to formalize a communication plan that addresses resident safety and medical needs in advance and limits exposure and risk to first responders during storm events. The Town could proactively send mailers to new and seasonal residents encouraging them to enroll in phone, email, or text-message-based communications. A robust social media presence could help to distribute important messages to many members of the community.

***c. Cultivate a proactive, resilient approach to health at the convergence of health care, public safety and public health with the creation of an integrated mobile health care program (Paramedicine).***

Paramedicine (also known as Mobile Integrated Healthcare) involves first responders, hospitals, and primary care providers working together to provide in-home medical assessment that can be particularly beneficial for older adults. The intent is to reduce the number of patients using emergency rooms, provide proactive care to the community, and efficiently allocate resources.

By implementing a paramedicine program, first responders would have the ability to care for patients in their own homes, reducing trips to the emergency room. The Commonwealth Care Alliance completed a paramedicine pilot program and found that 87.6 percent of emergency visits were treated in home.<sup>18</sup>

To assist in creating a mobile integrated healthcare program, create an interdepartmental team comprised of members of the Police Force, Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services as well as members from the Council on Aging and the Board of Health. Assess options for ambulance service as well as equipment, personnel (paramedics), and additional training required for such a program.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.commonwealthcarealliance.org/about-us/cca/innovations-that-improve-member-experiences/mobile-integrated-health>



***d. Support Aging-in-Place initiatives that also expand personal mobility options and increase walkability.***

The Council on Aging and other community partners could work in conjunction with the AARP “Age-Friendly Community Designation” (see Goal 5, Strategy c) to encourage Aging-in-Place services to support existing seniors in the community. Specific initiatives could include organizing town employees or volunteers to visit the homes of seniors to assist with housekeeping activities, preparing meals, and running errands. Ipswich currently hosts activities and programs at the Senior Center.

The Town could build on the values of quality-of-place and interconnected livability to shift away from traditional land uses and de-emphasize centralized facilities for elderly residents, such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities—and instead create co-living and intergenerational spaces. These services can also have multigenerational appeal and foster a robustness and connectivity often missing in communities today. Increasingly, a community’s quality of place is recognized as being centered on safety, mobility, health, and access to goods and services, in a pleasing environment.

Strategies in the Safe and Connected Transportation Network section to improve bike-ability and walkability can also help make Ipswich a more age-friendly community. De-emphasize the investments into auto-centric infrastructure and instead promote infill development near services and foster building density with viable connectivity via other modes of transportation.



Ipswich Senior Center,  
COA Archives

***e. Expand inter-departmental collaboration and resource sharing to maximize the value, efficiencies, and services offered to the public.***

Delivering public goods and services is essential and the effectiveness of such is built around the network and connectivity of the providers. Continual evaluation of community needs and the services provided with a focus on areas of common interest and efficiency is necessary to calibrate staffing needs. This could take the form of more interdepartmental task forces and periodic meetings between departments to share resources and knowledge.

As part of this, conduct regular assessments to ensure that Town departments have adequate staffing and resources. Task forces could include a group focused on improving communications and a group focused on creating and implementing a paramedicine program. A current example of interdepartmental coordination is the Town’s process for approving site plans and building plans, which must be reviewed by the Conservation Commission, Fire Department, Health Department, Utilities Department, and Building Department.

# GOAL 13

## DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

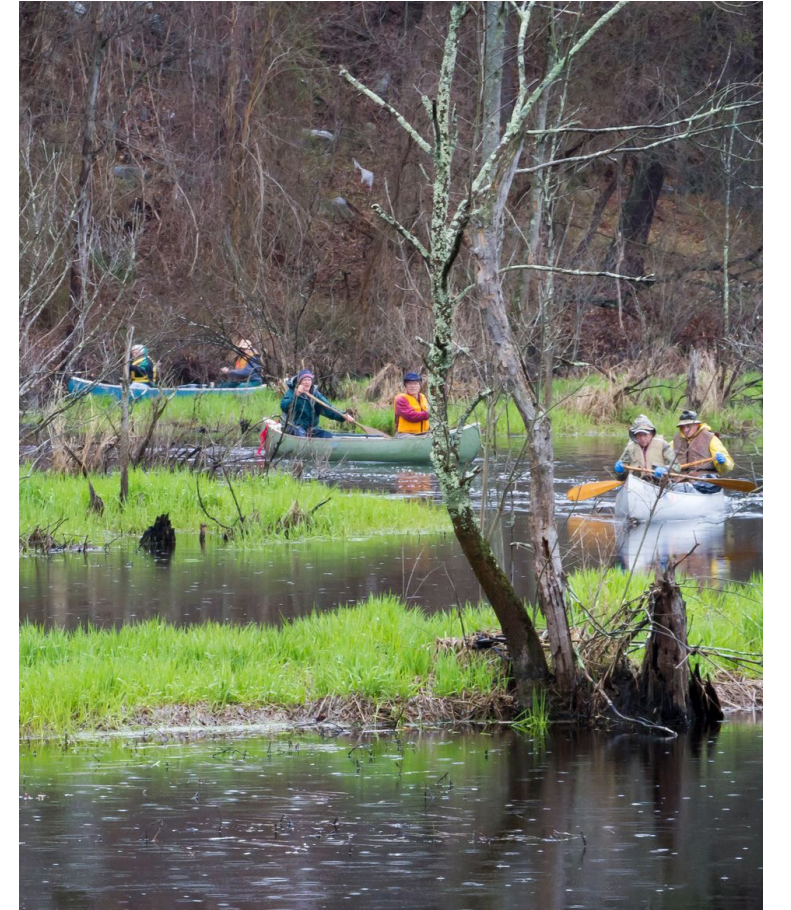
Elected and appointed Town boards and committees as well as Town employees are gender-balanced and reflect the diverse racial and ethnic composition of the community.

### STRATEGY

***a. Increase recruitment and training efforts to enhance diversity of members on Town boards and committees as well as Town and school employees.***

Actively work to attract more diverse representation in local government through membership on Town boards and committees as well as Town and school employees. Work with community organizations and diversity consultants to design job descriptions and recruitment strategies that attract more diverse candidates for municipal employment opportunities and volunteer positions within local government.

Conduct mandatory trainings for Town staff, elected officials, and volunteer boards and committees to increase awareness of topics related to diversity, racial equity, inclusivity, ethics, and open meeting laws. Establish a training program and materials to educate new and existing Town employees about different racial, ethnic, and other cultural biases and how to promote equitable treatment and inclusion within their departments. As part of this, include a more robust and regular in-person ethics training.



Patriots Day Paddle on  
the Ipswich River, Judith  
Schneider



# Implementation

“ *It’s important for the Town to incorporate the CDP into everything it does and for the CDP implementation to be flexible to respond to unknowns that the future holds.*

*- CDP Steering Committee*

This Plan has a fifteen-year planning horizon. From year-to-year, many actions will be required to successfully achieve the community’s vision including funding appropriations, regulatory amendments, board and commission votes, new municipal staff positions, and numerous studies. There will be many decisions to make along the way and a significant amount of coordination to ensure successful implementation.

To coordinate and oversee these varied actions, the Town intends to create a Community Development Plan (CDP) Implementation Committee that will report to the Select Board and will be made up of a variety of community representatives including town officials, residents, and members of the former CDP Steering Committee.

This new committee will have an important role to ensure that the vision, goals, and strategies of this Plan are effectively integrated into the Town’s priorities, that outcomes are regularly measured and evaluated, and that the plan is updated and adjusted as needed.

An associated Action Plan Matrix, a living document

that is anticipated to change over time, should guide the Implementation Committee’s and the Town’s priorities from year to year. The Action Plan Matrix identifies a rough time frame, responsible Town entities, and potential funding sources for each CDP strategy.

It is the Town Manager’s intent that the committee have access to funds to support its work. In addition, supplemental funding will be requested to support specific initiatives, projects, and staffing to implement this plan.



ACRONYMS

<b>AARP</b>	American Association of Retired Persons
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>AICP</b>	American Institute of Community Planners
<b>AMI</b>	Area Median Income
<b>APA</b>	American Planning Association
<b>APS</b>	Accessible Pedestrian Signals
<b>BPS</b>	Boston Public Schools
<b>CATA</b>	Cape Ann Transportation Authority
<b>CDC</b>	Community Development Corporation
<b>CDP</b>	Ipswich Community Development Plan
<b>COA</b>	Council on Aging
<b>COVID</b>	Coronavirus Disease
<b>CRC</b>	Ipswich Climate Resiliency Committee
<b>DPW</b>	Ipswich Department of Public Works
<b>DRB</b>	Design Review Board
<b>EBSCO</b>	Elton B. Stephens Company
<b>ELD</b>	Ipswich Electric Light Department
<b>EPA</b>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<b>EV</b>	Electric Vehicle
<b>FAICP</b>	Fellow of the American Institute of Community Planners
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Administration
<b>GBI</b>	Green Building Initiatives
<b>GEPD</b>	Ipswich Great Estate Preservation Development Zoning Provisions
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information Systems
<b>HSIP</b>	MA Highway Safety Improvement Program
<b>IGCC</b>	International Green Construction Code
<b>LED</b>	Light Emitting Diode
<b>LEED Design</b>	U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
<b>LMI</b>	Low/Moderate Income
<b>MA</b>	Massachusetts
<b>MAPC</b>	Metropolitan Area Planning Council
<b>MassDOT</b>	MA Department of Transportation

Ipswich Town Hall (2000 to present), which served as Ipswich High School from 1937 to 2000, Archives, Town Historian, Gordon Harris



<b>MBTA</b>	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
<b>MVP</b>	Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness
<b>NBS</b>	Nature-Based Solutions
<b>OSPZ</b>	Ipswich Open Space Preservation Zoning Provisions
<b>PAS</b>	Planning Advisory Service
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposals
<b>SHI</b>	MA Subsidized Housing Inventory
<b>SRTS</b>	Safe Routes to School
<b>TOD</b>	Transit-Oriented Development
<b>WIFIA</b>	U.S. Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act
<b>WNGR</b>	Ipswich Water Neutral Growth Report
<b>WUMP</b>	Ipswich Water Use Mitigation Program

RESOURCES

1e

Ipswich Water Neutral Growth Plan: <https://www.ipswichma.gov/877/Water-Neutral-Growth-Plan>

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Smart Growth Principles for Development: <https://www.mapc.org/aboutus/#missionsgp>

Mass Audubon’s Shaping the Future of Your Community: <https://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/advocacy/shaping-the-future-of-your-community/about-the-program>

EPA WaterSense Program: [EPA.gov/watersense](https://www.epa.gov/watersense)

Greenscapes North Shore Coalition: <https://greenscapes.org>

2a

Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA): <https://www.epa.gov/wifia>

Parker-Ipswich-Essex Rivers Partnership: <http://pie-rivers.org>

American Water Works Association Audit <https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Water-Loss-Control>

2c

The Story of Plastic website includes campaigns for corporate responsibility and public policies solutions as well as a Zero Wase Master Plan toolkit: <https://www.storyofplastic.org/take-action>

The Circular Economy Tool Kit provides information about the circular economy benefits and resources: <http://circulareconomytoolkit.org/Toolkit.html>

The MassDEP Municipal Waste Reduction Toolkit has four modules including Module 4: Promoting Recycling to Local Businesses. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-municipal-waste-reduction-tool-kit/download>

MassDEP also has a program called RecyclingWorks that provides recycling

assistance to help businesses and institutions reduce waste and maximize recycling, reuse, and food recovery opportunities. <https://recyclingworksma.com/>

2d

Additional guidance and leadership can be found through Whole Building Design Guide at <https://www.wbdg.org/resources/green-building-standards-and-certification-systems> and the US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) as well as the Green Building Initiatives (GBI) and the international Green Construction Code.

2e

The Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (MassEVIP) is a state incentive program available to public, private, and non-profit employers that provides up to 60 percent of funding up to \$50,000 to acquire electric vehicle charging stations for workplaces with a minimum of 15 employees.

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-massevip-workplace-charging-incentives>

2f

Case study: In 2017, Sterling, Massachusetts pioneered the use of a battery system capable of storing 3.9 megawatts of electricity for reserve power as well as reducing outsourced power demand under peak conditions. Refer to <https://www.greenmedia.com>

Mass Save and the Commonwealth Energy Tool for Savings (energyCENTS) <https://www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-energy-rebates-incentives>

Environmental and Energy Study Institute: <https://www.eesi.org/electrification>

3c

Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), Building Community Resilience with Nature Based Solutions: A Guide for Local Communities in 2020. [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema\\_riskmap\\_nature-based-solutions-guide\\_2020.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema_riskmap_nature-based-solutions-guide_2020.pdf)

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Green Infrastructure Project. BPS worked with

the Boston Water and Sewer Commission to install nature-based solutions including a public bioretention facility, a synthetic turf field surrounded by tree filters, a stormwater park, a medicinal garden and green roof, and enhanced tree trenches and pervious pavement. <https://horsleywitten.com/green-infrastructure-solutions/>

6c

<https://www.umass.edu/ses/gloucester-marine-station/north-shore-blue-economy>

6d

HartBeat of Main Street Grant Program <https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/hartbeat>

North Shore CDC Small Business Technical Assistance Program <http://northshoredcdc.org/programs/small-business-development>

7b

Main Street America supports local Main Street organizations and has many resources including its publication “The Future of Retail: Creative Approaches to Place-Based Entrepreneurship.” <https://www.mainstreet.org/about-us>

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grants provide funds for a wide variety of strategies related to Town Center revitalization efforts. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-Downtown-initiative-mdi>

7c

Mass Cultural Council: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/cultural-districts/>

7d

Massachusetts Cultural Council – Public Art Planning: [https://www.mass-culture.org/public\\_art.aspx](https://www.mass-culture.org/public_art.aspx)

7e

Hinshaw, Mark, FAICP and Morris, Marya, FAICP, American Planning Association PAS Report 591: Design Review: Guiding Better Development, July 2018.

<https://planning.org/publications/report/9154841/>

7g

MA Streets and Spaces Funding: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/eligible-and-ineligible-projects-shared-streets-and-spaces-grant-program>

10a

MassBike: <https://www.massbike.org/>

10c

MA APA, Sustainable Neighborhood Road Design: A Guidebook for Massachusetts Cities and Towns, May 2011: [https://masscptc.org/docs/core-docs/NRB-Guidebook\\_2011.pdf](https://masscptc.org/docs/core-docs/NRB-Guidebook_2011.pdf)

Other communities that have developed Sustainable Design Guidelines include

- Andover <https://andoverma.gov/816/Sustainability>
- Beverly <http://www.beverlyma.gov/sustainability/>
- Lynnfield [https://www.Town.lynnfield.ma.us/sites/lynnfieldma/files/uploads/40r\\_planned\\_village\\_design\\_standards.pdf](https://www.Town.lynnfield.ma.us/sites/lynnfieldma/files/uploads/40r_planned_village_design_standards.pdf)
- Salem <https://www.salem.com/sustainability-energy-and-resiliency-committee-serc/pages/sustainability>

10d

Recreation Trails Program: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/recreational-trails-program>

10e

MassDOT Community Transit Grant Program: <https://www.mass.gov/community-transit-grant-program>

11a

Massachusetts Road Safety Audits: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/road-safety-audits>

11b

Several communities have adopted a Traffic Calming Policy including Salem [https://www.salem.com/sites/g/files/vyhliif3756/f/uploads/neighborhood\\_traffic\\_calming\\_program\\_101.pdf](https://www.salem.com/sites/g/files/vyhliif3756/f/uploads/neighborhood_traffic_calming_program_101.pdf)



MASTER LIST OF GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1. CLIMATE-RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

- a. Implement the top recommendations of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) plan.
- b. Continue working regionally, with neighboring communities and other partner organizations, to share best practices and develop solutions to increase regional resiliency and address marsh and coastal erosion.
- c. Assess, forecast, and plan for improvements to high-risk infrastructure to prepare for extreme weather occurrences.
- d. Maintain and improve Ipswich’s water system performance.
- e. Adopt land-use policies to conserve and protect key natural resources and promote sustainable development and focus new development in areas best suited to accommodate it.
- f. Hire or contract with a grant coordinator and/or an engineer to help coordinate sustainability and resiliency efforts and to seek and manage grants across many departments.

GOAL 2. REDUCED CONSUMPTION AND EMISSIONS

- a. Continue to improve Ipswich’s overall water system resiliency and conservation, as identified in the Town’s 2020 Water Neutral Growth Plan recommendations.
- b. Expand public access to tools, outreach, and education regarding system demand and capacity related to stormwater management, wastewater, and drinking water.
- c. Strive to develop a successful local Circular Economy, driven by values of equity, transparency, diversity, and inclusion.
- d. Expand upon current sustainability standards for new construction and rehabilitation to help achieve the Town’s

Green Community energy use reduction goals.

- e. Increase the number of electric-vehicle charging stations in public locations.
- f. Leverage electrification incentives for private properties and enhance resiliency of the Town’s electric distribution system to work towards full electrification by 2040 and conversion of the electric supply to renewable resources.

GOAL 3. NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION FOR CLIMATE-RESILIENCY

- a. Protect, and preserve critical areas for water supply protection, wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, agriculture, and shellfish production.
- b. Educate and increase advocacy for policies that protect Ipswich’s natural resources and ecosystems, such as drinking water protection, flood control, pollution attenuation, and wildlife management.
- c. Use Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for stormwater management, flood storage and protection, and erosion control and land management best practices.
- d. Support local farmers and clammers with technical assistance, resource protection, and local regulations that protect farming and farmers.

GOAL 4. RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICE

- a. Expand education and advocacy efforts to promote creation of more diverse housing options including affordable housing options.
- b. Strengthen the Inclusionary Zoning provisions to promote unit production.
- c. Seek designation as an AARP “Age-Friendly Community” to advance local efforts to help people of all ages and abilities live easily and comfortably in the community.

- d. Restructure and expand the existing local first-time homebuyer programs to assist lower-income households most in need.
- e. Expand the capacity of the Town to implement housing initiatives and produce housing units.
- f. Work with the Housing Authority to explore opportunities to expand its stock of affordable units and support the organization’s development and management capacity.
- g. Repurpose underutilized parcels, including Town owned and tax foreclosed property, for the creation of affordable or mixed-income housing options.
- h. Amend zoning to explicitly permit congregate housing and co-living, including in the Great Estate Preservation Development and Open Space Preservation (Cluster) zoning provisions.
- i. Provide more flexibility to create Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and allow the creation of tiny houses or other small detached accessory units.

GOAL 5. SMART HOUSING LOCATIONS

- a. Adopt a 40R Smart Growth Overlay District with associated design guidelines to generate well-designed Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) with mixed-income housing near the train station.
- b. Create an area vision plan and consider zoning amendments to allow mixed-use commercial and residential development along Route 1.
- c. Amend lot size and dimensional requirements for neighborhoods that are walkable to Town Center to permit contextually-sensitive infill development and allow adaptive reuse of existing houses.
- d. Amend zoning in and near Town Center to allow well-designed

multi-family and/or mixed-use options by-right with administrative site plan review and design guidelines, rather than by special permit only.

GOAL 6. DIVERSE AND THRIVING ECONOMIC BASE

- a. Expand the Town’s capacity for economic development by hiring an economic development planner to specialize in long-term planning and marketing Ipswich to future employers.
- b. Create an economic development strategic plan to identify a comprehensive, proactive economic development strategy to support strong fiscal, market, and economic health.
- c. Capitalize on new and emerging opportunities to strategically position Ipswich as part of the Blue Economy in collaboration with the North Shore Blue Economy initiative.
- d. Coordinate with business owners, developers, and entrepreneurs to regularly assess and support the needs of existing businesses.
- e. Foster and enhance opportunities to partner with local industry leaders to prepare students for career paths, including vocational and agricultural.

GOAL 7. VIBRANT TOWN CENTER

- a. Create a new Town Center Plan with a focus on urban design with the Riverwalk as a unifying design element to and to improve connections to the Ipswich River.
- b. Support and strengthen the organizations that serve to fund improvements and promote businesses in Town Center.

- c. Seek a Massachusetts Cultural District designation for the area around the Town Center to bring together and promote Ipswich’s business, arts and cultural institutions, and historic organizations.
- d. Work with the arts community to develop and install public art throughout the Town Center and along the Riverwalk at the Ipswich River and develop a Public Art Plan.
- e. Update design standards and guidelines and strengthen the Design Review Board to ensure that new Town Center development is compatible with the Town’s goals.
- f. Consolidate parcels and invest in placemaking improvements at the Hammatt Street Parking Lot to enhance the district experience and draw people to Town Center’s restaurants, shops, and other businesses.
- g. Continue to repurpose public spaces to enhance the business district experience and enliven Town Center.
- h. Improve the Town-owned Peatfield Street river launching area to enhance access for non-motorized boats to the Ipswich River and draw more people to spillover to Town Center area as a destination.
- i. Work collaboratively to better promote Ipswich’s Town Center and the Riverwalk as a destination for visitors.

GOAL 8: HERITAGE AND ECO-TOURISM

- a. Establish a Tourism Committee that includes members of the Cultural Council, Historic Ipswich, the Ipswich Historical Commission, and other related groups..
- b. Develop a strategic tourism plan that builds on the economic development strategic plan to create a framework for sustainable heritage and eco-tourism.

- c. Support existing community partners, such as Historic Ipswich, the Trustees, the Ipswich River Watershed Association, and others, through improved marketing and advertising.
- d. Promote locally produced food, including shellfish, and beverages to capitalize on emerging agritourism and agri-culinary trends.

GOAL 9: TOWN CENTER PARKING

- a. Develop consistent parking management through regulations, restrictions, and signage in Town Center, including striped on-street parking spaces and improving parking-related signage and wayfinding.
- b. Create a Joint Management Agreement for the Hammatt Street parking lot to coordinate multiple owners.
- c. Evaluate need for handicap and electric vehicle parking in the Town Center.
- d. Advocate the MBTA for secure, covered bicycle parking at train station and provide bicycle racks in the Town Center.
- e. Review on-street parking standard to better serve the needs of older adults and residents with mobility challenges, such as spaces that are at sidewalk level.

GOAL 10: LOCAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- a. Complete and implement Town-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans to improve cycling and walking conditions in Ipswich.
- b. Advance projects identified in the Town’s Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and integrate non-motorized transportation improvements into other road reconstruction projects.

- c. Adopt Sustainable Neighborhood Road Design through the Ipswich’s subdivision road standards to encourage walking, biking, and low impact development.
- d. Expand the Town’s efforts to improve trail accessibility and expand accessible community trails.
- e. Examine need for expanding the existing Town shuttle service.
- f. Advocate for expanded regional bus service, such as a shuttle between destinations in other communities.

GOAL 11: SAFE TRANSPORTATION

- a. Evaluate and improve critical intersections and roadways to enhance safety for all users.
- b. Develop a traffic calming policy to guide implementation of measures to improve safety and reduce vehicle speeds, particularly in Town Center and neighborhoods.
- c. Continue participation of Middle School, Doyon Memorial School, and Winthrop School in the MassDOT Safe Routes to School Program and apply for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) infrastructure grant to improve safety and connectivity for children walking and biking to school.
- d. Assess and implement short and long-term solutions to heavily-travelled roadways that flood, including adaptation of Jeffrey’s Neck Road, Argilla Road, and Water Street to prevent storm and tidal flooding.

GOAL 12. COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

- a. Better understand the specific service needs of targeted populations in the community as well as those of the general population and ensure programs best meet those needs and improve communication and outreach efforts.
- b. Connect residents in coastal hazard zones, particularly those over age 65 and including seasonal and/or renter-occupied homes, with emergency protocols, local shelters and services, and other resources.
- c. Cultivate a proactive, resilient approach to health at the convergence of health care, public safety and public health with the creation of an integrated mobile health care program (Paramedicine).
- d. Support Aging-in-Place initiatives that also expand personal mobility options and increase walkability.
- e. Expand inter-departmental collaboration and resource sharing to maximize the value, efficiencies, and services offered to the public.

GOAL 13. DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

- a. Increase recruitment and training efforts to enhance diversity of members on Town boards and committees as well as Town and school employees.



# THANK YOU!

Special thanks to each community member who participated in public events and surveys and who took the time to speak with Steering Committee members, Town staff, and the planning consultants to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the Town of Ipswich.

## Community Development Plan Steering Committee

- Jacob Borgman, Resident
- Andrew Brengle, Open Space Committee
- Carolyn Britt, Planning Board
- Chris Doucette, Finance Committee
- Philippa Drew, Resident
- Peter Eliot, Resident
- David Feldman, Open Space Committee
- Betsy Frost, Betsy Frost Design/Bus. Roundtable
- Don Greenough, Housing Partnership
- Gordon Harris, Historical Commission/Town Historian
- Walter Hartford, Finance Committee
- Luke Hourican, Resident
- Ingrid Miles, Resident
- Chris Morse, Architectural Preservation District Comm.
- Carl Nylen, School Committee
- Ann Orcutt, AnnTiques/Ipswich Bus. Roundtable
- Will Paulitz, Conservation Commission
- Ed Rauscher, Select Board
- Christine Sandull, Resident
- Kathleen Spinale, Resident
- Jay Stanbury, Resident
- Sheila Taylor, Council on Aging
- Helen Weatherall, Resident
- Kevin Westerhoff , Planning Board
- Willie Whitmore, Select Board
- Clark Ziegler, Resident

## Department of Planning and Community Development

- Ethan Parsons, Planning Director
- Kristen Grubbs, Town Planner
- Glenn Gibbs, Former Planning Director

## Town Manager

- Anthony Marino, Town Manager

## With the Assistance of Planning Consultants

- Jennifer M. Goldson, AICP, Founder and Managing Director, JM Goldson LLC
- Anna Callahan, Community Planner, JM Goldson LLC
- Barry Fradkin, Community Planning Analyst, JM Goldson LLC
- Avery Wolfe, Community Planning Assistant, JM Goldson LLC
- Katie Metz, Graphic Designer
- Jeffrey Maxtutis, Senior Associate, BETA
- Arek W. Galle, RLA, AICP, Senior Associate, BETA

Right: New Year's Day Hike, Crane Beach, Judith Schneider

Back Cover: 375th Commemorative Stamp, Alan Pearsall





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